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BLIND
ROSA
AND
OTHER TALES





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Blind Rosa,
AND OTHER TALES.



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BLIND ROSA.

ON a fine summer's day, in the year 1846, the diligence that runs between Antwerp and Turnhout was seen proceeding on its usual journey along the highway. The horses trotted, the wheels rattled, the coach creaked, the conductor spurred on the horses unceasingly with the clacking of his tongue; the dogs barked in the distance; the birds rose from the fields, and mounted aloft; the shadows ran by the side of the diligence, and danced, with fantastic bounds and leaps, between the trees and bushes.

On a sudden the conductor stopped at a short distance from a lonely inn, and, descending from his seat, opened the door of the coach without saying a word, let down the iron steps, and held out his arm to a traveller, who, with his portmanteau in his hand, stepped out on the road. The conductor put up the steps again as silently, shut the door, sprang into his seat, and whistled gently as a signal for his horses to start afresh on their journey. The animals resumed their trot, and the heavy waggon proceeded on its monotonous course.

In the meantime the traveller had entered the inn, and, calling for a glass of beer, sat down at

a table. He was a man above the middle stature, and seemed to be about fifty years of age. He might have even been taken for a sexagenarian, had not his vigorous mien, animated and lively look, and a certain youthful smile that played about his mouth, given him a more youthful appearance. His hair, indeed, was grey, and his brow furrowed, and his countenance showed that amount of decay which fatiguing labour and continued anxiety imprint on the features. Nevertheless, his manly chest and erect bearing could not escape observation, and his eye still glowed with the fire of a hale and vigorous maturity.

From his dress he might have been supposed to be a rich citizen: there was nothing striking in it, except that from his coat being buttoned up to his chin, and his having a large meerschaum hanging at his breast, he might have been taken for an old military man, or a German.

After waiting on him, the people in the house went about their usual business, without taking any further notice of him. He saw the two daughters go backwards and forwards, the father supply the fire with wood and turf, and the mother fill the dinner-pot, but no one addressed a single word to him, although his eyes followed every member of the family with longing gaze, and in his looks might be read the question,—“Don’t you then, know me?”

The beating of a clock, hung up on the wall, now caught his ear. It seemed as if the sound affected him painfully, for his countenance assumed the expression of an unpleasant surprise, which chased the smile from his lips. He rose up and looked at the clock ill-humouredly, until it had ceased to strike nine o’clock.

The landlady noticed the unaccountable excitement of the traveller, and stood near him, in a state of

astonishment, looking up at the clock in order to discover what he had seen in it so extraordinary.

"The clock has a fine sound, has it not?" she remarked to him. "It has gone now for twenty years without having occasion for the clockmaker to touch it."

"Twenty years!" exclaimed the traveller, "what then has become of the clock that was here before? Where is the image of the Blessed Virgin that stood on the chimney? Is it both broken and forgotten?"

The woman looked at the stranger with surprise, and replied, "Our Zanna broke the image when she was a little child, in playing with it: it was such a bad one, that even the clergyman advised us to buy another: here is the new one; don't you think it much finer than the old?"

The traveller shook his head in token of dissent.

"As to the clock," she continued, "you will hear it immediately: the ugly old machine was always behind, and has been put away in the lumber-room for ages: there it is just beginning to rattle!"

In fact, a peculiar sound was now heard in the room, proceeding from behind a wooden partition: it resembled the hoarse voice of a bird calling out nine times—Cuckoo, cuckoo.

This extraordinary sound, nevertheless, caused the traveller to smile with delight. Accompanied by the woman, he went into the lumber-room, and there saw, with eyes that glistened with pleasure, the old clock-work, that had not yet ceased its cuckoo note.

The woman's two daughters now drew near the stranger, from curiosity, and stared, first at him, and then at their mother, with astonishment. The looks of the two girls awoke him to a consciousness of his situation, and he returned to the coffee-room, followed by his three attendants.

There is no question but that he was pleasingly affected, for his countenance became animated with so attractive and amiable an expression, and his eyes, moistened with tears, shone so brilliantly, that both the girls, with evident feelings of affection and goodwill, drew closer to him.

Taking hold of each of them by the hand, he said,—

“What I am about seems, no doubt, curious to you, my dears; you cannot conceive how it is that the voice of the old cuckoo should delight me so much. Alas! I was also once a child, and my father used to come here, after the benediction, to take a glass of ale; and when I was a good boy, I was allowed to come with him. For hours I have stood there, waiting for the cuckoo to open his little door; and then I would dance and jump in harmony with the measure of his song, wondering in my simplicity at the poor bird, which I thought a masterpiece. And the image of the Blessed Virgin, which one of you broke, I loved for its beautiful blue cloak, and because the child Jesus stretched forth its hands to me a child, and laughed when I laughed. Now the child is nearly sixty years old, his hair is grey, and his face wrinkled; he has lived thirty-four years in the steppes of Russia; and yet he remembers the Blessed Virgin and the cuckoo-clock as vividly as if his father had brought him here for the last time only yesterday.”

“Are you, then, from our village?” inquired Zanna.

“Yes, certainly,” replied the stranger, quickly. But this explanation had not the desired effect; the girls smiled somewhat more confidently, but this was all; they seemed to be quite indifferent to the traveller’s account of himself.

Turning round to their mother, he then said,

Can you tell me what has become of old Baes Joostens?"

"If you mean Baes Jan," replied the woman, "he as been dead these five-and-twenty years."

"And his wife, the good, stout, jolly lady, Petronille?"

"She is also dead," was the reply.

"Dead! dead!" exclaimed the stranger, with a sigh; "and the young shepherd, Andries, who made such fine wicker-baskets?"

"Also dead," replied the landlady.

The traveller bent down his head, and became buried in his own melancholy reflections.

In the meanwhile the landlady had gone into the barn, in order to acquaint her husband with the conversation which she had had with this unknown person. The landlord accordingly entered the room, and, by the heavy tread of his wooden shoes, roused the traveller from his reverie; who, starting up, held out his hand, delighted, to the man. The latter, however, took it quite coldly, and looked at him with an indifferent air.

"Don't you know me, then, Peter Joostens?" inquired the stranger, mournfully.

"No; I don't recollect ever having seen you before," was the reply.

"Have you forgotten, then, who it was that risked his life to save yours, when you had sunk in the water, under the ice, and would inevitably have perished without help?"

The man shrugged his shoulders.

Much affected at the insensibility of the fellow, the traveller further asked,—

"Have you really forgotten the youth who defended you from the attacks of the bigger boys, and made you a present of so many birds'-eggs for the purpose of completing your May-feast? who taught

you also to make all sorts of whistles out of reeds, and took you with him when he went to market with the tile-maker's carts?"

"I have some slight recollection of what you speak about," he replied; "my deceased father told me that I was saved from drowning when I was a child of six years old, by Long John, who went away with others in the time of the French as cannoneer in the service of the Emperor: who knows in what unconsecrated ground his bones are resting! May God have mercy on his soul!"

"Ah, you do know me, then, at last!" exclaimed the stranger; "I am Long John, or rather John Slaets." No reply being made to this, he added, surprised, "You surely recollect the good marksman at bird-shooting, the same who was thought the best sportsman for miles round, who carried off all the prizes, and was envied by the young men because the girls liked to see him? I am that person, John Slaets by name."

"It may be all very true," replied the innkeeper, mistrustfully, "but yet I do not remember you; no offence to you, my dear Sir. There is no bird-shooting carried on any longer in our parish; the shooting-ground has been turned into a country seat, which has had no inhabitant for a year past, owing to the death of the lady proprietor."

Repulsed by the cool behaviour of the innkeeper, the traveller made no further attempt to be recognised by him. He therefore quietly remarked, before going away, "There are in the village, no doubt, many of my friends who have not forgotten me. You, Peter Joostens, were very young at the time when I went away. I am sure that Paul the tile-maker will recognise me as soon as he sees me. Does he still live at the clay-pits?"

"The tile-work was burnt down long ago; the

clay-pits have been filled up, and now produce crops of the finest hay. The meadow now belongs to Tist, —the rich Tist."

"And what has become of Paul?"

"After the misfortune of the fire, the family was scattered abroad; I do not know for certain, but perhaps he is dead. As I see that you are referring to times so long past, I would beg to suggest that the grave-digger would be the best person to answer your inquiries, for otherwise you will certainly find it difficult to meet with any other person who can do so. He can tell you off by heart all that has passed in the village for a hundred years."

"Yes, to be sure, Mr. Landlord, the grave-digger will be the right man. Peter John must be now ninety years old."

"Peter John? that is not the name of the grave-digger. Lauw Stevens is his name."

The stranger was pleased to hear this, and said,—
"Thank God that one, at least, of my old companions is still left!"

"Was Lauw, then, your friend, Sir?"

"Not exactly a friend," replied the traveller, shaking his head: "we were always quarrelling, and often rivals. Once, in the heat of our struggling, I threw him from the little bridge into the stream, so that he was nearly drowned; but that is more than thirty years since. Lauw will be glad to see me again. Now, Mr. Landlord, give me your hand: I hope to drink a glass of ale at your house sometimes."

So saying, he paid his bill, and taking up his portmanteau, left the house. At the back of the inn he struck into a path which led him through a plantation of young firs.

Although the acquaintance he had made with the innkeeper was not of a very agreeable nature, it had

still yielded some consolation to our traveller's heart; he had felt charmed by inhaling again the fragrance of early years; the recollections that thronged upon him at every step infused new life into him. But the young trees could say nothing to him: in their stead, in former times, stood a fine forest, whose trees were thick with birds' nests, and whose skirts brought to maturity refreshing crops of bilberries. But, alas! the forest had shared the fate of the inhabitants of the village. The old trees had fallen, or had been cut down; a new generation had taken their place, a generation that was strange and indifferent towards him. But the song of the birds, that resounded from all parts of the leafy covert, was still the same; the winds sighed softly, as of old, through the branches; the grasshoppers chirruped as of yore, and the refreshing breeze still came wafted over the fragrant heath. All things had altered—except nature:—her works, in their great features, still remained the same. Such were the thoughts that arose in our traveller's mind; and although joyous and cheerful, he pursued his path without looking up from the ground till he was out of the wood.

Then was presented to his gaze a succession of fields and meadows, among which the silver threads of a stream wound their way. In the back-ground, a short distance off, rose the church-spire, with its golden cock, that shone in the sunbeams like a day-star; and, further off, the windmills whirled their red sails round and round.

Overpowered by inexplicable emotions, the traveller stood still: his eyes became filled with tears; he dropped his portmanteau on the ground, and stretched forth his hands, while his countenance beamed with affection and rapture.

At the same moment the sound of the *Angelus* was heard.

The traveller knelt down, with his head sunk on his breast, and remained in this state, motionless, for some time, but profoundly affected. His heart and his lips poured forth a prayer, inaudible to mortal ears save his own, as he raised his eyes and hands towards heaven, with deep-felt thanks. Then, taking up his portmanteau, he said, looking towards the church-tower,—

“At least thou art not altered—thou lowly church, wherein I was baptized, and where my first Communion was made; and where everything within its walls seemed to me so holy and wonderful. Yes, I shall see thee again: I shall see the Blessed Virgin with her golden dress and silver crown; St. Anthony, with the pretty pig; St. Ursula; and the black demon with the red tongue, about whom I used to dream so often! And the organ, on which the sacristan played so beautifully, while we, with swelling hearts, sang—*AVE MARIA GRATIA PLENA!*”

These last words the traveller sang out, aloud, while at the same time the tears rolled down his cheeks. Silently, and in musing mood, he walked on further, until he came to a small bridge which led across the rivulet to a turf-field.

Here his countenance became animated with delight, and he said with great emotion,—

“Here it was that I first pressed Rosa’s hand in mine: here it was that our eyes confessed for the first time, that upon earth there is a blessedness which seizes on the heart with sovereign power, and opens up heaven to the youthful mind. As now, so then, the yellow water-flag flaunted in the sunshine, the frogs croaked, and the larks sang above our heads.”

Stepping across the bridge, he said to himself,—

“The frogs that witnessed our love are dead! the flowers are dead! the larks are dead! Now an old man, who returns home like a shadow of departed

years, greets their offspring! And Rosa, my dear Rosa, is she still living? Perhaps—probably—she is married, and surrounded by children. Those who remain at home quickly forget their unfortunate brethren, who wander about, far from home, in wretchedness and sorrow. Poor pilgrim,” he said, with a sigh, “the old jealousy still arises in thy breast, as if thy heart still were in its spring; the time of love is past, long since. Be it so, that she only recognises me, and remembers our early friendship, I will not lament the journey of 1800 miles, and will gladly quit this world, to repose in peace beside my departed friends and relations.”

A little further on, and near the village, he entered an inn, whose sign carried a plough, and called for a glass of beer.

In the chimney-corner, by the great pot, sat a very old man, who gazed into the fire with the immovability of a statue.

Before the woman had returned from the cellar with the beer, the traveller had recognised the old man. Drawing his chair nearer to him, he seized his hand and said joyfully,—

“God be thanked that He has permitted you to live so long, Baes Joris. You are one that remain to us of the good old times. Don’t you know me? Don’t you know the mad youngster that crept so often through your hedge, and ate the apples before they were ripe?”

“Ninety-six years!” muttered the old man, without moving.

“Very likely; but tell me, Joris, is the wheelwright’s Rosa still living?”

“Ninety-six years!” repeated the old man, with hollow voice.

The woman now made her appearance with the beer, and said,—“He is blind and deaf, Sir; don’t

give yourself the trouble to speak to him, for he cannot understand you."

"Blind and deaf!" exclaimed the stranger, in a melancholy tone. "What havoc the inexorable progress of time makes in thirty years! I now walk among the ruins of a whole race of mankind."

"Do you inquire about the wheelwright's Rosa?" continued the woman. "Our wheelwright had several daughters, but there was no Rosa among them. Lisbeth was the eldest, and married the letter-carrier; the second was Goude, and makes caps; the third is Nele; and the youngest is Anna, who is of weak intellect."

"I do not speak of these people," replied the stranger, impatiently; "I mean the family of Kobe Meulinckz."

"Oh, they are all dead, long ago, Sir," was the woman's reply.

Deeply affected by this piece of intelligence, the traveller paid for his glass of beer and left the inn with feverish haste. At the door he held up his hands to his eyes, and exclaimed despairingly,—

"Good Heavens! Even my poor Rosa is dead! Dead! dead! still the same inexorable word. Will no one on earth recognise me? not one friendly eye greet me?"

With tottering steps, as if intoxicated, he entered a wood, and leaned his sorrowing head against a tree in order to recover himself. He then directed his steps towards the village. His path led him across a solitary churchyard, where at the foot of the cross he stood with uncovered head, and said,—

"Here, before the image of the Crucified, Rosa promised that she would remain true to me and await my return. Anguish overcame us at parting, on this seat fell our tears; in deep grief she received my dearly bought love-pledge, a golden heart. Poor

Rosa! perhaps I now stand above your mouldering remains."

In this melancholy mood of mind he sank down, quite dispirited, on a bench, on which he sat for a long time almost unconscious. His gaze wandered over the churchyard, and the narrow mounds of earth which indicated the newly-made graves. It grieved him to see how that many of the wooden crosses had fallen down from age and decay, while no filial hand was there to re-erect them, as a token of remembrance, above the last resting-place of a father or a mother. His own parents, too, slept here, beneath the sod; but who could tell him the exact spot?

He sat here for a long time absorbed in melancholy reflection. Eternity—unfathomable eternity—oppressed his soul like a heavy leaden coffin. He was awakened from this trance by the sound of a human footstep.

It was the old grave-digger, who with his spade on his shoulder was going along the churchyard wall. He bore the marks of poverty and wretchedness; his shoulders were much bent, and had become crooked with constant work at the spade. His hair was white, and his face wrinkled, but his eyes still glowed with vigour and animation.

The traveller recognised Lauw—his rival—at the first glance, and would have run to meet him, had not the bitter disappointments which he had already experienced made him resolve to say nothing, but wait to see whether Lauw would know him again.

The grave-digger stood looking at him for some time with evident curiosity, and then began with his spade to mark off a piece of ground for a new grave, casting a stolen glance every now and then at the person who sat before him, while his eyes sparkled with apparent pleasure. The traveller, who noticed the expression of the grave-digger's countenance, felt

his heart beat faster within him, and waited in the expectation that Lauw would come to him, and call him by his name.

The grave-digger looked at him once more in a very scrutinizing manner, and then put his hand into the pocket of his old jacket, from which he drew out a little dirty old book, to which a black-lead pencil was attached by a leathern string. Turning round, he seemed to write something in the little book.

This proceeding, which was accompanied by a look of exultation, surprised the traveller so much, that he rose up, and going to the grave-digger, asked him, in a tone of surprise, what it was that he had written in the book.

"That is my concern," he replied: "your name in the list has stood open for a terrible long time; I have now put a cross before your name."

"Do you know me then?" asked the traveller, with a joyful air.

"Know you?" replied the grave-digger sily; "that may or may not be: I only recollect, as if it were yesterday, that an envious fellow threw me into the water, and nearly drowned me, because Rosa, the wheelwright's daughter, loved me. Many a year has passed since then."

"Do you say that Rosa loved you?" replied the stranger: "I can tell you that that is not true!"

"You know it is true very well, you jealous fool! Did she not wear for a whole year the consecrated ring that I brought with me from Scherpen-havel, until you forcibly took it away, and threw it into the river?"

At hearing this, the countenance of the traveller wore a melancholy smile. "Lauw! Lauw!" he exclaimed, "the recollection of these old times makes us children again. Believe me, Rosa never loved you as you now think. She took your ring from a

friendly feeling, and because it was consecrated. In my younger days, I was forward and rude, and did not always keep on the best terms with my comrades; but surely a period of four-and-thirty years, a period that acts so destructively on men and things, ought to have cooled down our wretched passions. Am I to find an implacable enemy in the only person who has not forgotten me? Come, give me your hand, and let us be friends: I will make you happy for the remainder of your life."

The grave-digger, however, withdrew his hand, and said angrily,—

"It is too late to forget; you have embittered my whole life. There has not been a single day that I have not thought about you. You, who have contributed so much to my unhappiness, may easily judge if your name can be blessed by me."

The traveller smote his trembling hands together, looked up to heaven, and exclaimed in tones of anguish, "Alas! hatred alone recognises me! hatred alone forgets nothing!"

"You have done well," continued the grave-digger, laughing, "to come back, in order to lay your bones beside those of your parents. I have kept a good grave for you. When blustering old Jan is committed to the earth, the rain will wash away the villany from his carcase!"

Every member of the traveller's body trembled when he heard this barbarous piece of wit. Indignation and anger were depicted on his countenance. He soon, however, became more composed; and dejection and compassion took the place of his former feelings. "You hesitate," he said, "to give your hand to a brother, who returns home after an absence of four-and-thirty years! Your first greeting given to an old comrade is one of bitter scorn! That is not right on your part, Lauw. Be it so; we

will say no more about it. But tell me where my deceased parents are interred."

"I don't know," muttered the grave-digger; "that was five-and-twenty years ago, and since then the same place has been occupied by other graves three times over." These words had such a melancholy effect on the traveller, that his head drooped powerlessly on his breast, and he stood staring before him lost in vacancy and in sorrow.

The grave-digger continued at his work, but more slowly, as if overpowered by a train of gloomy reflections. He remarked and scanned the deep affliction of the traveller, and shuddered at the thirst of revenge which had led him to torment a fellow-creature so exceedingly. This change of mood was depicted in his countenance; the tone of bitter scorn which was formerly heard from his lips, ceased; he looked for some time at his grieving comrade with growing sympathy, and advancing slowly towards him, took hold of his hand, and said in a softened and impressive manner,—

"Jan, my friend, forgive what I have said and done. I have treated you shamefully, although you must consider that I have suffered very much through your means."

"Lauw," replied the other, much affected, and shaking his hand; "these were errors of our youth. To show you how little I thought upon our old enmity, when I heard you pronounce my name, I felt myself indescribably happy. For that I am thankful to you, however much your wicked contempt struck to my heart. But now tell me, Lauw, where is Rosa buried? It will give her joy in heaven to see us reconciled, and both standing above her last resting-place."

"You want to know where Rosa is buried?" repeated the grave-digger. "Would to God that she were indeed in her grave, poor creature!"

"What do you say?" exclaimed the traveller; "is Rosa still living?"

"Yes, she is living, if that can be called living which consists in bearing the dreadful lot which she has to endure."

"You terrify me; for God's sake, tell me what misfortune has befallen her."

"She is blind."

"Blind! Rosa blind! Without eyes to look on me again? Alas! alas!"

Overcome by grief, he tottered to a seat, and sank down upon it.

The grave-digger came up to him and said,—

"She has been blind for the last ten years, and goes about begging her daily bread. I give her two stivers weekly, and whenever we bake, she receives a piece of bread."

The traveller jumped up, shook earnestly the grave-digger's hand, and said,—

"A thousand thanks! God bless you for your love to Rosa! In her name, I take upon me to reward you, for I am rich. To-day we shall see each other again. But do tell me, in few words, where Rosa lives. Every moment must be for her a century of misery."

With these words he drew the grave-digger by the hand, and went in the direction of the gate leading out of the churchyard. Having reached the wall, the grave-digger pointed with his finger, and said,—

"Do you see that small chimney smoking at the corner of the wood? That is the cottage of the broom-maker, Nelis Ooms; Rosa lives there."

Without waiting for further explanations, the traveller proceeded through the village in the direction indicated. He soon arrived at the lonely dwelling. It was a humble hut, built of clay and rushes, and whitewashed on the outside. A few steps from the

door were four little children, who, basking in the sun, were pleasantly occupied in binding up wreaths of wild flowers, consisting of corn-flowers and poppy-heads. They were barefooted and half-naked. The eldest, a boy of about six years old, had nothing on him but a linen shirt. While his three little sisters looked at the stranger sily and bashfully, the boy gazed at him uninterruptedly with his great eyes, that showed surprise and curiosity. The traveller smiled to the children, but went into the hut without stopping, and saw in a corner a man occupied in binding up brooms, while a woman sat by the fire at her spinning-wheel. They seemed to be about thirty years of age, and it could easily be seen that they were a happy and contented couple. Besides, everything they wore, and all about them, was as clean and tidy as could be expected from country people in their condition of life.

His entrance did not occasion them much surprise, although they politely came forward to offer their services. They thought that he wished to inquire his way, and the man was advancing towards the door in order to point out the right road to him; but when, instead of asking that, he inquired if Rosa Meulinckz lived there, the husband and wife looked at each other with astonishment, and could scarcely find words to reply.

"Yes, dear Sir," at length said the man, "Rosa lives here, but she is at present gone out begging. Do you wish to speak with her?"

"Where is she?" exclaimed the stranger, in an excited manner. "Cannot you find her immediately?"

"That would be difficult, Sir; she is gone out with an attendant, to make her weekly round; but she will certainly return in an hour; she never fails."

"Can I wait here, my good folks, until she comes home?"

Scarcely had he uttered these words, when the man went hastily into an adjoining apartment, and brought out a better kind of chair than the rough one which stood in the outer room. Not content with this, the woman went to a drawer, and took out a snow-white cloth, which she spread out on the chair, which was then presented for the stranger to rest upon, who was surprised at such slight but well-meant marks of politeness, and returned the cloth to the woman with many thanks. He then quietly sat down, and began to look around the room in order to see if he could discover anything in it that would tell him about Rosa. Turning his head, he felt a little hand sliding into his, and playing with his fingers. Looking with some curiosity to see who was the perpetrator of this friendly greeting, his look met that of a blue-eyed little boy, who gazed upon him with a kind of heavenly innocence, as if he had been his father or his brother.

"Come here, Peterkin," said the mother; "you must not make so bold with the gentleman."

Peterkin, however, seemed not to hear this piece of advice, but continued to look at and fondle the unknown person, so that our traveller was quite at a loss to understand the friendly ways of the child.

"Dear child," the stranger said, "your blue eyes pierce deeply into my soul, and because you are so pretty I will make you a present."

He then put his hand in his pocket, and drew out a little purse with a silver clasp and adorned with variegated ornaments, which he gave to the little boy after putting some money in it.

The child looked at the present with much delight, but still kept hold of the traveller's hand.

The mother drew near and made a motion to the

child, and said, "Peterkin, you must not be rude; thank the gentleman and kiss his hand."

The child kissed his hand, made a bow to him, and said, with a clear voice, "Best thanks, Long Jan."

A stroke of lightning could not have confounded the traveller more than to hear his name thus pronounced from the mouth of the innocent child. Tears involuntarily rolled down his cheeks; he took the child on his knee, and looked him steadfastly in the face.

"So you know me, do you, you little cherub? And yet you never saw me before. How is this? Who taught you my name?"

"Blind Rosa," was the reply.

"But how is it possible that you could know me? God himself must have taught your childish mind."

"Oh, I knew you immediately," cried Peterkin, "for when I led Rosa out begging, she was always speaking about you, and said you were so tall, and had black sparkling eyes, and that you would be sure to come back, and bring us all many pretty things. I was not, therefore, afraid of you, for Rosa had taught me to love you, and had said that you would give me a large bow and arrows."

These simple stories and disclosures on the part of the child transported the traveller with delight. He suddenly lifted the boy from the ground, kissed him affectionately, and said to his parents with great emotion,—

"This child, my good friends, will be taken care of. I will take charge of his up-bringing and education, and I trust it will prove a blessing for him to have recognised me."

The parents were quite stupefied with delight and astonishment. The husband replied in a confused manner,—

"You are by far too good; we also thought we recognised you, but we were not so sure of it, because Rosa had not told us that you were so rich."

"My good friends," replied the stranger, "and so you know me! Hitherto, as the reward of all my inquiries here, I have met only with death and forgetfulness; but here, among you, I have found friends, relations, and a family."

The woman pointed to an image of the Blessed Virgin that stood on the mantelpiece, and said,—
"Every Saturday evening a candle was lit here for the safe return, or for the repose of the soul, of Jan Slaets."

The traveller devoutly lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said,—

"Almighty God, I thank Thee that Thou hast given greater might to love than to hatred! My enemy has concealed my name within his bosom, associated with the gloomy remembrance of his ill-will: my loving friend has lived in my remembrance, and with all around her, animated by her love, she has kept me, as it were, ever present in this family, and made me even a favourite of the children, while yet between us there was a distance of more than a thousand miles! My God! I am sufficiently rewarded."

A long silence ensued on this, before Jan could overcome his emotion, at seeing which the people of the house were filled with deep reverence for him. The husband had betaken himself again to his work, but was always ready, at the slightest signal, to render any service to his guest, who had taken Peterkin again on his knee, and now asked the good woman, quite composedly, if Rosa had lived long with her. The woman, as if preparing to enter on a long explanation, came nearer with her spinning-wheel, and sitting down, said,—

“ I will tell you, dear Sir, how that happened :— You must know that when Rosa’s parents died, the children separated. Rosa, whom all the gold in the world would not have induced to marry—the reason why, I need not tell you—Rosa ceded her whole share to her brother, only stipulating to reside in his house during her lifetime. She then took to millinery, and made a good deal of money by it, and having no occasion to give the money to her brother, she spent all her earnings in good works, visited the sick, and paid for the doctor when it was necessary. She was always ready to comfort the sorrowful, and had ever something nice at hand in cases of illness. When my husband and I had been only married six months, he came home one day with a very bad cold, of which you hear the remains in the cough that he still has about him. We have to thank God and the good Rosa that he is not now lying in the churchyard. Oh, could you only have seen, dear Sir, what she did for us, out of pure love and kindness ! She brought us coverlets, for it was cold, and we were in the most extreme poverty ; she brought two doctors from other parishes, who consulted with our own doctor about the case of the sick man ; she sat up with him, alleviated his sufferings and my grief by her affectionate conversation, and gave us all the money that was needed to pay for food and doctor’s stuff,—for Rosa was a favourite with every body ;—and when she went to the lady at the mansion, or the farmer, to beg something for the poor, she was never refused a small contribution. For six weeks my husband kept his bed, and Rosa never ceased protecting and assisting us, until he by degrees was able to return to his work.”

“ How glad I should be to see poor blind Rosa ! ” said the traveller.

The husband raised his head from his work, tears

stood in his eyes, and he exclaimed with enthusiasm, —“ If I could give my heart’s blood to restore her sight, I would willingly do it, to the last drop.”

This burst of feeling affected Jan exceedingly ; the good woman remarked it, and made a sign to her husband to be more moderate in his remarks. She then continued,—

“ Three months afterwards God gave us a child, the same that sits on your knee. Rosa wished to stand godmother to it, and Peter, my husband’s brother, was to be godfather. On the day of the baptism inquiry was made as to the child’s name. Rosa wished that it should be called John, but the godfather, a worthy man, but rather obstinate and self-willed, insisted that its name should be Peter. After long discussion the child was baptized John Peter ; we call him Peterkin, because his godfather has a right to decide about that, and he will have it so, and we should be sorry if it were otherwise. Rosa, however, will not hear a word about Peter, and always calls the child Johnny. The child is accustomed to it, and knows that it is so called because, dear Sir, it is your name.”

The traveller pressed the boy fondly to his breast, and kissed him warmly. With silent wonder he looked in the child’s friendly eyes, and his heart was deeply affected.

The woman went on to say,—

“ Rosa’s brother had engaged with people in Antwerp, to buy up all kinds of provisions, and to take them over to England. It was said that by such a trade he would become rich, for every week he took ten carts full of provisions to Antwerp. At first, all went on quite well, but the bankruptcy of a man in Antwerp for whom he was security deprived him of all his gains, and he could scarcely pay half his debts. From grief occasioned by this he soon after died, and

we trust that God Almighty took him to a better world. Rosa then went to live with Flinck the grocer, in a little room in his house. In the same year, Charles, the grocer's son, who had been a soldier, came home with bad eyes, and in two weeks afterwards the young man became quite blind. Rosa, who felt for him, and listened only to the feelings of her heart, tended him during his illness, and took him out on her arm, in order to amuse him. Unfortunately, she caught the same disease in her eyes, and since then she has never seen the light of the sun. Flinck, the grocer, is dead, and his children are scattered about in the world. Poor blind Charles lives at a farm-house in Lierre. We then begged Rosa, poor girl! to come and live with us, and told her how glad we should be to have her in our house, and to work for her as long as we lived. She complied with our request. Since then, six years have passed, and she has never heard from us but friendly words, thank God! for she is herself all love and goodness; and if there is any service to render to Rosa, the children fight about it who shall do it first."

"And yet she begs!" replied the traveller.

"Yes, dear Sir," said the woman, with somewhat of pride in her manner, "but that is not our fault. Do not think that we have forgotten what Rosa did for us. Even if we had been suffering from hunger, and were in the greatest straits, we never would have imposed it upon her to beg. When our family increased so quickly, Rosa thought, the good creature, that she would prove a burden to us, and wanted to assist us. She could not be persuaded to the contrary, and actually fell ill in consequence, and after half a year's resistance, we were obliged to yield.

"It is, however, no disgrace for a poor blind creature to beg. But we don't need it, although we are

poor. Of what she obtains by begging, she presses a little upon us, for we cannot always be disputing with her ; but we give her back double as much for it. Without knowing it, she is better clad than we are, and the food we give her is also much better. The remainder of the money got by her, I think I have understood from her own words that she puts it by in a savings-bank, until the children are grown up. Her affection deserves thanks, and we cannot act contrary to her wishes."

The traveller listened to all this account in silence ; but a happy smile about his mouth, and his eyes suffused with tears, showed how deeply his feelings were affected by all that the woman told him.

The woman ceased speaking, and applied herself to her task of spinning. The traveller remained sunk in thought for a while. All at once, he set down the child on the ground, went up to the husband, and said in an authoritative tone—"Leave off working!"

The broom-maker did not comprehend rightly what was said to him, and was startled by the peculiar tone in which it was uttered.

"Give over work, and give me your hand, Farmer Nelis!"

"Farmer!" muttered the besom-maker, astonished.

"Yes!" said the traveller, "throw the besoms out at the door: I will give you a farm-yard, four milk cows, a calf, two horses, and everything necessary for husbandry. You do not believe me," he continued, showing the broom-maker a handfull of money, "but I tell you the truth. I might give you money: I esteem and love you too much to offer you money; I will rather make you the proprietor of a small farm, and be the protector of your children, even after my death."

The worthy folks looked at him with tearful eyes, and seemed scarcely to know rightly what was going on.

While the traveller was about to make them fresh assurances of his good intentions, Peterkin took him by the hand, as if he had something to communicate to him.

"Well, dear child, what have you got to tell me?"

"Mr. John," replied the boy, "look, the labourers are coming home from the field. I am sure to meet Rosa; shall I run and tell her that you are come?"

The traveller seized Peterkin by the hand, and drew him hastily towards the door, and said,—

"Come, come, rather take me to her!"

So saying, and bidding a hasty good-bye to the people of the house, he followed the child, who was proceeding with hasty steps in the direction of the centre of the village.

As soon as they came to the first houses, the peasants rushed out in surprise, from barns and stables, and looked after the traveller and the boy, as if they were a wonder to behold. In truth, they presented a singular spectacle: the child in his shirt, and bare-footed, dancing along and laughing and frolicking, with a hold of the unknown person's hand. The astonished people could not conceive what the rich gentleman, who seemed to them to be at least a lord, had to do with Peter the broom-maker. Their astonishment increased when they saw the stranger bend down and kiss the child. The only thought that entered their minds was, that the rich man had taken the child from his parents, in order to bring it up as his own. People from the city, who have no children of their own, are often accustomed to do this; and little Peterkin was the prettiest child in the village with his large blue eyes and bright

curly locks. Still it did seem amusing that the rich gentleman should take the child along with him in nothing but his shirt! The traveller walked rapidly on. The whole village seemed lit up, as it were with a magical glow. The verdure of the trees seemed of a brighter green; the lowly huts of the inhabitants wore a holiday smile; the birds sang with enchanting melody; the air was impregnated with balsamic odours, and life-giving energy.

The traveller's attention had been diverted from the child, to enjoy all this new blessedness. In this state his gaze was directed to a distance, and he endeavoured to pierce through the foliage that seemed to close up the path at the other end of the village.

Suddenly the child seized his hand with all its might, and said,—

“Look! look! there comes Rosa with our Trinny!”

And, in fact, an old blind woman now made her appearance, led by a little girl, and coming along through the village. The traveller, instead of following the hasty invitation of the child, stood still to contemplate, with grief and sorrow, the poor blind female, who was approaching with unsteady steps. Was this his Rosa? Could this be the beautiful and amiable maiden whose image still lived so brightly and youthfully in his heart?

This reflection lasted only for a moment; he led the child along with him, and ran to meet her; but when he was now only a few paces from her, he could no longer contain himself, and exclaimed, “Rosa! Rosa!”

As soon as this sound reached the ears of the blind Rosa, she withdrew her hand from that of her leader, and her whole frame began to tremble; but recovering herself, she stretched out her arms, and ran forward, crying, “John! John!” She then felt

in her bosom for a golden cross that hung about her neck by a string, which she broke in two, and, holding up the cross to him, fell upon his breast. Disengaging herself however from his arms, she gently took him by the hand, and said,—

“O my dear friend, do not think it is because I am not overjoyed at finding you again, but there is a vow which I made to God, and which I must first perform: come with me to the churchyard.”

He scarcely understood what she meant, but there was something so solemn and sacred in the tone of her voice, that he yielded without hesitation. Without noticing the bystanders, who had run from all quarters and stood about them, he led Rosa to the churchyard. Here she went to the seat beneath the cross, and beckoned to him to kneel down beside her, saying, “I made a promise to heaven that we should make our thanksgiving together on this spot.” She raised her clasped hands, uttered softly a prayer, and then threw her arms about her friend’s neck, and embraced him. In the mean time, Peterkin danced about the people from the village, clapping his hands, and crying out, “It is Long John! it is Long John!”

On a fine autumn day in 1846, the diligence from Antwerp to Turnhout drove along the road at the accustomed hour. Suddenly the driver drew up at a short distance from a lonely inn, and opened the coach door. Two young travellers leaped out, laughing and exulting, and spreading out their arms like birds escaped from captivity, and which are again essaying their wings in perfect liberty; they looked at the trees and the beautiful blue sky, with the rapture which we experience when we have left the city, and are enjoying the unbounded scene of nature with every breath we draw. Looking towards the field, the younger traveller exclaimed enthusiastically,—

“ Listen ! listen ! ”

In fact, at this moment an indistinct sound of music was heard through the trees. The air was of a quick and merry character, so that, in hearing it, one could scarcely refrain from dancing. While the younger of the two stood pointing with his finger in silent delight, the other said, as if in mockery,—

“ ‘ There under the lime-trees, to trumpet and horn,
Around in the dance a gay crowd is borne;
And none of them all, who there laugh and sing,
Think on sorrow or death, or any sad thing.’ ”

“ Come, come, friend John, do not be so soon inspired ; probably it is nothing but the celebration of the appointment of a new mayor.”

“ No, no,” said the other ; “ this is no merely official rejoicing. Let us go and see the village girls dancing ; it is so pretty ! ”

“ First of all, let us go into the village, and get a glass of ale at Baes Joostens’s, and inquire what is going on, and enjoy the pleasure of an unexpected surprise.”

The two travellers stepped into the inn, and thought they should have split their sides with laughing, as soon as they put their heads within the room. There stood Baes Joostens, stiff and upright as a poker, against the chimney. His long, blue, holiday coat, full of folds, hung down nearly to his feet. He saluted his well-known guests with a forced smile, in which a degree of shame was apparent ; and he scarcely dared to budge, on account of his stiff shirt-collar, which at every movement pricked his ears.

When the travellers entered he called out, impatiently, but without turning his head,—

“ Zanna, Zanna, be quick ! I hear music. I told you that you would be too late.”

Zanna came running in with a nosegay, and

looking so beautiful, with her nicely-plaited high peaked cap, her woollen gown, rose-coloured boddice, and large gold ornament on her breast in the form of a heart, and her ear-rings! Her face wore the blush of joyous expectancy, and resembled a huge flower, unfolding its dark leaves.

"A lovely peony, that opens its blossoms on a fine May-day!" exclaimed the younger of the two companions.

Zanna had now drawn the two glasses of beer, and ran, singing and laughing, with her flowers, to the door.

Baes now called out at the top of his voice, very impatiently,—

"Lisbeth! if you don't come down directly, I will go without you as sure as I am standing here."

An old clock, that hung on the wall, pointed at this moment to the hour of nine, and called out in a sombre tone—"Cuckoo! Cuckoo!"

"What bad taste is this?" inquired one of the travellers. "Have you sold the beautiful clock that used to stand here, in order to torment yourselves all the year round with this death-song?"

"Yes, yes," said the landlord, laughing, "be as merry as you please over this bird; he brings me in yearly many golden ducats; a good field, that needs no manure."

Four cannon shots were now heard in the distance.

"Oh dear! oh dear!" shouted the landlord, "the feast has begun; that woman will sicken me with her delay."

"But," asked the elder traveller, "what is going on here to-day? Is it fair time? Or has the king come to the village?"

"Oh, there are wonderful things going on here to-day," replied the landlord; "if you knew all, you might fill a book with it, and tell no stories. The old

cuckoo, also, has his place in the history of Blind Rosa."

" '*Blind Rosa!* ' what a fine title !" interrupted the younger traveller ; " that would make a fine companion to the '*Sick Youth.*' "

" No, that won't do," replied the other ; " as we are going out to collect matter for tales, we must share fairly in the invention of them."

" Well, then," said the younger, half mournfully, " we can afterwards draw lots about it."

" Be it so," replied the other ; " and now, Landlord, push away these ugly shirt-collars from your ears, and tell us all about it. Whenever the book is printed, you shall get a copy for your trouble."

" I cannot undertake to explain it all to you now," he replied, " for I hear my wife coming down stairs to set out with me. But come along with us to the village, and I will tell you by the way why the cannon are firing and the music is playing."

The landlady now entered the room, and dazzled the eyes of the travellers by the brilliancy of her toilette, which consisted of mingled colours of red and blue, yellow and white. She ran to her husband, pulled his shirt-collar up a little higher, took hold of his arm, and led him hastily out of doors. The two travellers followed them, and during the journey Baes Joostens told his attentive hearers the whole history of Long John and Blind Rosa ; and although in doing this he was well-nigh out of breath, he was, nevertheless, assailed with all sorts of questions. They learned also that Mr. Slaets, that is Long John, had purchased the old cuckoo, in order to hang up the old clock in the inn : that he had been four-and-thirty years in Russia, during which time he had become rich by the fur-trade ; that he had purchased the manorial estate, on which he intended to reside with Rosa and the family of the broom-maker,

whose children he had adopted ; that he had made a present to the grave-digger of a considerable sum ; and finally, to-day, had prepared a great festival for the labourers on his estate.

The speaker was still going on with his story when the party reached the village ; and now the travellers listened no longer to what he said, for they were fully occupied in gazing at all the wonders presented to their view. The whole village in front of the houses was adorned with green pine-trees, bound together by snow-white garlands or magnificent wreaths of flowers. At intervals above the heads of the spectators, all kinds of inscriptions were seen in large red letters. Maypoles were erected here and there, with small flags, ornaments in tinsel, and festoons of birds' eggs and glass-ware. On the ground, along the path of the procession, the boys and girls had placed wreaths of flowers on the silvery heath-sand, and had inscribed in it, according to custom, the signatures of Jesus and Mary. The letters J. and R., signifying John and Rosa, and forming a cypher, were also enclosed in a wreath, and were the device of the schoolmaster.

A crowd from all the neighbouring villages, prompted by curiosity, was collected together, in order to witness this remarkable marriage. The travellers moved about from one group to another, and heard what the people said ; but before the procession, which was coming across the fields, reached the village, they ran to the entrance of the church-yard, and stationed themselves there in an elevated position, for the purpose of having a good view of everything.

They looked at the procession with a kind of reverence ; and in truth it was beautiful and touching to such a degree, as to kindle within the breasts of the young travellers feelings of poetry and romance.

More than sixty young girls, from five to ten years of age, dressed in white, walked in the bridal array, with the enchanting smile of childhood, like lambs sent down from the fold of heaven. Wreaths of roses, encircling their brows, and entwined amidst their loosely flowing locks, seemed to contest the prize of beauty with the crimson lips of the children.

The younger of the two travellers remarked,—

This is like a fairy tale of Andersen; the sylphs have forsaken the heart of the flowers; simplicity and innocence—youth and beauty—what an enchanting picture!”

“Ho, ho! here come the peonies; and Hannah Joostens, the landlord’s wife, foremost of all,” observed the elder traveller; but the younger was too deeply affected by all that he heard and saw to notice so unpoetical a remark. He looked with transport on the bigger girls, who, in formal state and resplendent with health and beauty, followed the children. How beautiful seemed the features of these grown-up maidens, beneath their high-pointed and snow-white caps! How charming the mantling colour that crimsoned their cheeks! How enchanting their modest smile—that went and came, like the breath of zephyr on a summer evening over the glassy lake!

Ah! there comes blind Rosa, with her bridegroom, Mr. Slaets. How happy the poor woman must be, after suffering so much! Sunk down to beggary; mourning for four-and-thirty years, and feeding her soul with a hope which she herself acknowledged to be vain; and now he has come, the friend of her childhood—of her youth! Leaning on his arm, she walks to the altar of God, who has heard her. The vow pledged beneath the cross in the churchyard is now to become a reality, and she is to be John’s wife! On her breast still shines the simple golden cross

that Long John had given her! Now she hears the joyful greetings, the songs and the music, that celebrate his return! She trembles with emotion, and presses her husband's arm more closely to her, as if she doubted the reality of her happiness.

Nelis, with his wife and children, follow next. They are all dressed like wealthy peasants. The parents walk first, with downcast heads, and wiping away the tears of astonishment and gratitude from their eyes, as often as they look upon their blind benefactress. Peterkin holds his head erect, while his fair hair, that plays about his neck, streams in the breeze. He has a hold of his sister's hand.

But what a troop is here! the remains of an army shattered by the power of time!

About twenty men follow Nelis's children. In truth, they presented a singular spectacle; they were nearly all grey-headed or bald; many were bent, and the greater number leant on their staves; two had crutches, one was blind and deaf, and all were so decrepit and exhausted by long years of toil, that one might have thought that death had brought them out by force from their graves.

In front went Lauw Stevens, who stooped so that he almost touched the ground with his hands. Blind Baes, from the Plough Inn, supported himself by leaning on the miller's grandfather. These patriarchs formed the remains of a generation that lived at the time when Long John was the cock of the village, and had won for himself the first place by his youthful courage.

Next came the village folk, men and women, who had been invited to the bridal.

The procession entered the church;—the people outside heard the organ accompanying a festal song.

The younger traveller led his companion aside, in the churchyard. Stooping down, he turned round, and presented to the other his closed hand, from which hung two straws, saying at the same time,—“Draw!” “Why so quickly?” asked the other. “Never mind; the subject pleases me, and I wish to know whether I am to treat it or not.”

The elder drew one of the straws; the younger threw his on the ground, and with a sigh exclaimed, “I have lost!”

So it happens, dear reader, that the elder of the two companions has told you the story of **Blind Rosa**. It is a pity; for otherwise you might have read in beautiful verse what I have told you in bad prose. May fortune favour you better another time!

H. C.

CANDELARIA.

AT the beginning of 1817, I was sub-lieutenant in a regiment of cavalry then in garrison in the principal town of one of the southern departments of France. I was sixteen years of age, as was the rule under the old dynasty, and I fancied that I should be a very unfinished personage if I did not add to the qualities natural to youth, the defects generally found in my profession. I was, then, mischievous as a page, giddy as a musketeer of 1750, and in order to unite the past with the present, as it is expressed in the charter, I gave myself, with the aid of an enormous pipe, the air and importance of a grumbler, which contrasted well with my schoolboy appearance. I was the amusement of my comrades when they saw me stroking the down on my lips, in the vain hope of hastening a moustache, or when, to show off more soldierlike manners, they heard me imitate the unpolished jargon that the bird, immortalized by Gresset, belonging to the Nuns of the Visitation, had acquired on his voyage on the Loire ; and being very fond of bon-bons, my uniform being orange and green, and my nose bearing considerable resemblance to a parrot's beak, the first lieutenant of the squadron had nicknamed me Verdant Green, a joke so good that no one disputed it.

Well! after all, I was the happiest and most petted officer in the army. And, indeed, why should they not like a good-natured fellow, who was willing to ride the first horse that came; who did his own duty very negligently, but was always ready to do that of another; who paid for the punch that every one but himself drank; and who had gallantly fought with a burgess of the town, to avenge an affront which he had not received, but of which he was only convinced after they had crossed swords?

Our garrison, the name of which I shall not mention, because I have not the same fighting disposition I once had, was really one of the most out-of-the-way places imaginable. Figure to yourself a small town of eight thousand inhabitants, built on the southern side of a barren hill, under which flowed a capricious river that inundated our barracks ten times during the winter, but whose waters, in the summer, were insufficient to refresh our poor horses. No pleasant walks in the neighbourhood, only dusty roads, without even a tree to protect one from the sun's rays; and no society, excepting what was to be found once a-week at the Prefecture, which having seen once you felt little inclined to mix with again. This being the case, our society was confined to ourselves, which I certainly did not regret, for at this period I had not tasted the pleasures of the world, and I was still in the first fervour of my thoughts on friendship;—delightful illusions, which nothing is so likely to foster as a military life. I divided my time between the duties, badly fulfilled, of my profession, reading romances which had found no place in my father's library, and long sittings in the café belonging to the garrison, where, with my long pipe in my mouth, I listened to the old officers of the Empire relating in a melancholy way their glorious campaigns.

I enjoyed for about six months this state of things,

pleasant enough in spite of its monotony, when we learned that the French Government, upon the representations of Ferdinand the Seventh, had just ordered that a dépôt of Spanish refugees, old partisans of King Joseph, should be transferred from Pau, where they were considered to be too near the Pyrenees, to the little town where we were quartered. This was quite an event to poor idlers like ourselves, and, to say the truth, many a silly hope owed its origin to this news, for we knew that many of these refugees had their families with them.

One evening we were, according to custom, sitting on the benches of our esplanade, beneath which lay the road leading from Pau, when we perceived in the distance a long file of carriages of various forms, which advanced slowly towards us. Some men wearing long brown mantles marched at the head of the cavalcade, which bore a sad and mournful appearance.

"These are the refugees," said our major; "they told me they were to arrive to-day."

These words were scarcely uttered, when we went and placed ourselves at the edge of the esplanade in a serious and respectful attitude: curiosity had given place to a feeling of interest. I, for my part, recalled to mind that my father was formerly an emigrant, and that the first bread I had tasted had been that of an exile. As the procession passed us we took off our hats; the men, who were on foot, returned our salute with an expression of gratitude replete with dignity; as for the women, they were inside the carriages: no indiscreet eyes sought to penetrate their retirement. Afterwards, we all returned to our quarters, our hearts filled with unusual emotions. We thought of all the difficulties which surrounded these poor victims of proscription, who had arrived without introduction, perhaps without resources, to stay for

a short time in a place from whence, without doubt, they would be again driven as soon as they were settled and had gained friends. I occupied the first floor of a pretty little house opposite the barracks, which were situated in the lower part of the town: the ground floor was inhabited by the proprietor and his wife, excellent people, who treated me with as much kindness as if I had been their son instead of their lodger. The husband took me out hunting; the wife, when I was under arrest, came with her knitting into my room, and related for my amusement the munificent charities of Monseigneur d'A —, the last Archbishop before the revolution; both confided their affairs to me, and never questioned me on mine, which indeed was not very necessary, for I never made a mystery of them; they remembered that I was a sub-lieutenant, and only seventeen. When I returned home, I found Madame Delpech standing at her door enjoying the air. She saluted me with a friendly "good evening," adding,—

"As you have returned so early this evening, Sir, is it possible that you can be under arrest?"

This "Is it possible?" addressed to me, was, no doubt, said ironically; but it did not annoy me, and I answered,—

"No, madame, I am not under arrest; I return early, for my heart is sad at witnessing the arrival of these poor Spanish refugees."

"Ah! then you have seen them? Well! My husband is gone to the Town Hall to offer them his services. You know we have that building to let at the bottom of the garden? It might suit some family."

"Perhaps you would ask a high rent for it?"

"That depends upon circumstances; if the persons are poor who take a fancy to it, they will pay accordingly. You know that M. Delpech and I are not avaricious: Almighty God, in giving us riches, and

depriving us of the happiness of having children, no doubt intended that we should be useful to those who are not so well off as ourselves."

"In the meantime you have given me much pleasure, for you have spoken like a good aunt of mine, whom I greatly loved. Good night, Madame Delpech."

Soon after this conversation, a carriage stopped at the door, and I heard the voice of my worthy landlord calling his wife. Afterwards it appeared to me they were unloading some boxes in the street, and that there was an unusual commotion in the little garden that led to the building before-mentioned. I concluded that M. Delpech had attained his object, and I was glad of it on his account. I went to sleep with this thought in my mind as soon as the noise ceased, which, however, was not till late at night. The next morning, when my servant called me to go to parade, he informed me that the house was let to an old Spanish General, who had taken possession of it with his daughter.

"Have you seen them?" I asked.

"Yes, Sir, for I helped to unload the carriage. They are very unfortunate. Only imagine—the father is blind, and the daughter dumb."

"Do everything that you can for them without waiting for them to ask you," said I. "Then, should they offer you any return, accept it: the poor think themselves rich when they have the opportunity of being generous; we must not deprive them of this pleasure."

Having said this, I mounted my horse, and went to take my place at the head of my troop. I was sure that my servant would do all that I had suggested to him. On my return, I inquired of Madame Delpech about my neighbours. She confirmed what my servant had previously told me of the exiles; and added that, fatigued with their journey, and with the

various arrangements of their new abode, they had retired to take some hours' repose. Madame Delpech appeared to feel much for their situation, and had already taken means to improve it. Worthy woman, if she be still living, and these pages should by chance fall into her hands, she will at least see that I have neither forgotten her virtues, nor the remembrance of her kindness.

My lodging in her house consisted of two rooms; the one which I used as a bedroom, was towards the street; the other, which I called my drawing-room, looked upon the little garden which communicated with the other house. This little garden was planted in the English style, with much taste, and though separating the two houses, was common to both, thus giving to all an opportunity of meeting.

Several days passed without my seeing anything of my new neighbours. It is true, that I avoided going to the window, and they, fearing to intrude upon me, did not walk in the garden. As soon as I was informed of this circumstance, I begged Madame Delpech to assure them that I was quite grieved at their reserve, and that it would give me real pleasure if they would act without restraint. They replied that they had acted in that manner towards me simply because I had done so to them; but that they would gladly act otherwise, provided I would set them the example by first walking as usual in the garden. An hour after this reply reached me, with my pipe in my mouth and a volume under my arm, I seated myself under the shade of a woodbine, which grew nearly in the middle of the garden. I remained there some time to show my desire of being on friendly terms, and then joined my comrades in the Coffee-house. Here I found some of my most intimate friends seated round a bowl of "bishop." Two

Spanish officers of the refugees were with them, to whom I was introduced.

Nothing could be more interesting than the position of these men, nor more noble than their conduct. It was in obedience to the command of their lawful Sovereign, that they had taken the oath of fidelity to King Joseph: a feeling of honour kept them true to their oath; though at the same time they hated him, and were devoted to the prisoner of Valençay. Thus the return of the latter to his dominions was hailed by them with enthusiasm, which, however, did not prevent their being driven into exile. They owed the joy of revisiting their country to a revolution which they detested; and then, an event which ought to have been the occasion of happiness to them, fate decreed should be otherwise.

They related these facts to us, without, however, introducing one word of bitterness against a sovereign who had exiled them simply because they had obeyed him. I still remember the emotion that their conversation caused me.

A feeling of confidence being thus established between us, I spoke to them of the old General who was living in my neighbourhood, and I asked them if it were true, that he was blind, and that his daughter was dumb. "It is not his daughter who is with him," they replied, "it is an angel from heaven, for no one knows from whence she comes. At all events, the poor man has more need of one than any one else, for he is the most wretched amongst us: none of his countrymen will see him."

"Why this double proscription?" we all asked

"It is a terrible history, and we avoid relating it as much as possible; but, if you are very anxious to know, we will make an exception in your favour."

We formed a circle round the two Spaniards; the

elder one spoke, and related to us the following history:—

“The Chevalier de Colombres, Commanding Officer of the Walloon Guards, was Governor of Tolosa, when the army commanded by the Grand-duke of Berg invaded Spain. Having, or believing that he had, cause to complain of some acts of injustice, he was one of the first to give in his adhesion to the new Government, and instead of serving it with regret, he devoted himself to it with all the zealous ardour of a renegade from conviction. As he was a brave man, and had the gift of gaining the hearts of others, his example was followed by a number of men, principally foreigners, who had been at different times under his command; he was thus enabled to form a formidable guerilla force, at the head of which he soon made himself the terror of Guipuscoa. Become thus an object of horror to his fellow-citizens, and obliged from time to time to give proofs of his fidelity to the French military authorities, he acquired in the opposite camp, a renown equal to that of our most famous partisans. Our indomitable population, who had not quailed before the soldiers of the greatest and most fortunate captain of the age, shuddered even at the name of him, whom they would have adored, had his talents been employed in their defence. The night would not be long enough, were we to relate all the bold adventures and terrible acts of vengeance of this man whom Spain curses to this day. I will choose, then, that one deed which has above all others rendered him an object of execration to us, his companions in exile.

“The Chevalier de Colombres had an elder brother, deputy to the Cortez, like himself a talented and resolute officer. The Junta established at Cadiz, thought that in sending the Count de Colombres into Guipuscoa, with a commission to collect together

the loyal Spaniards, they should render the position of the Chevalier so unpleasant, that he would be obliged to retire to another province, where he would have less personal influence, and where, consequently, his band would be more easily destroyed. This plan was put in execution, but the result was very different to what they anticipated. The Count succeeded in raising a guerilla force; but the Chevalier remained at the head of his, and the two brothers fought with an animosity and perseverance unexampled in this war, in which were displayed crimes of the blackest dye, as well as acts of truest heroism. After many encounters, in which the fortune of war favoured sometimes one, sometimes the other, the Chevalier was on the point of being conquered, when a stratagem, contrived with infernal ability, delivered his brother into his hands. 'What would you do if I were your prisoner?' said Joseph's general to Ferdinand's. 'I would have you hung as a traitor to your country,' replied he. 'I will be more humane,' said the other, with equal ferocity, 'for you shall die as a soldier.' Five minutes after this dreadful dialogue, a dozen Walloon foot soldiers shot the Count de Colombres behind a hedge, twenty paces from his brother."

A movement of horror, which we could not restrain, interrupted the Spaniard: he resumed in these words:—

"After this event, the French army retired from Spain, and in a short time the Chevalier was obliged to expatriate himself for ever. I am, and indeed we all are, ignorant of what became of him, during the first two years of his exile; but when we met him at Pau, at the beginning of 1816, he was then blind, and his life a most miserable one. Too poor to have a servant, and too much hated by his companions in misfortune, for them to take pity on his infirmity, he had been obliged to enter a military hospital, whither

the report of his crime had preceded him. He existed there several months completely neglected, when the chaplain came to tell him that a dumb young woman requested to share his lot, and begged that they would inform him, that she had resources that she wished to place at his disposal. No one knew who this young woman was, nor from whence she came, and Colombres, in accepting her services, was obliged to submit to remain in ignorance like the rest of the world. She has been with him nearly a year, and we much admire the judgment and tenderness displayed in her care of him; and thanks to her, not only is the poor blind man no longer alone, but he is no longer poor. You see, gentlemen, that we have good cause to say that this young woman is an angel."

"Yes," exclaimed I, with vehemence; "but this Chevalier de Colombres is a monster! I am vexed now that I am in the same house with him; however, I will never see him."

"Do not say so, young man," said an old captain of my regiment, in a serious tone. This old man had been in the service from the time of the first insurrection in La Vendée. "When I was serjeant-major," he continued, "in the famous army of Mayence, I set fire to my own village, and yet, for all that, I was not a villain. But you see, there is something so terrible in political animosities, that they warp the conscience, and then the greatest crimes appear in the light of duties,—obstinacy even takes the high-sounding title of honour. Let us, then, ask of God to spare us the pain of witnessing other revolutions, and, in order to soften the memory of those that are past, let us forgive, that we may hope to be forgiven. When I returned to my home after the peace, I met with an old royalist, who said to me,—‘You burnt down my house; as for me, I

killed your father : let us embrace each other,'—and we did so, crying out, 'Vive la France !' Then we compared notes with respect to our wounds ; he had twenty, and I eighteen. When the balance is so nearly even, it is not difficult to be reconciled."

"That is all very well, my dear Captain," replied I, half convinced ; "but then, to shoot a brother !"

"You quite forget that if the brother had been the conqueror, he would have hung the Chevalier."

"Well, but at least you must agree, that it was a fine opportunity for the display of mercy !"

"Very true, my friend ; I quite agree with your observations. As for you, detest him if you feel that it is right to do so ; to pity him would be better : but do not despise him."

These words made a considerable impression on me ; nevertheless, when I returned home, which I did shortly afterwards, I still held to my determination not to become acquainted with the Chevalier de Colombres ; and I seated myself in my balcony to show that I relinquished to my neighbours the exclusive enjoyment of the garden.

The Spaniard's narrative had cast a gloom over my mind, and I had formed a most painful impression of this hard-hearted man, who had not hesitated to sacrifice his brother to his political opinions. I pictured him to my mind—tall, thin, and bent with age, with a scornful brow, half bald, a bilious complexion, hoarse voice, and ferocious smile ; in a word, resembling some great criminal represented on the stage, to which at that time my knowledge of such characters was confined. My opinion on this subject was so completely formed, that I felt sure of recognising the Chevalier wherever I should chance to meet him. I thought I should equally recognise his young companion ; the portrait I had formed of her in my imagination was a most enchanting one.

I was roused from my reverie by the noise of footsteps in the immediate neighbourhood of my room, and almost at the same moment a hand knocked gently at my door. I gave the usual invitation on such occasions, and my surprise was great on seeing two persons enter who I felt certain were my neighbours, although they did not resemble the creatures of my imagination. The Chevalier de Colombres was certainly tall, but you seldom see a man of more noble appearance, or one calculated to command greater respect. His forehead was lofty, yet calm and pensive, shaded by locks of long flowing white hair, which gave to his countenance a most captivating expression of sweetness and dignity. His eyes, which looked dim rather than quite sightless, preserved in their appearance a certain brilliancy, which gave one the impression that the light was not extinguished for ever. His mouth was large, but the strongly compressed lips denoted firmness of character, and resolution was marked on his prominent chin. These two features were the only ones that corresponded with those I had fancied in the former Governor of Tolosa.

He advanced towards me, led by a young girl, who charmed me by her simple and modest demeanour.

"Sir," said the General, addressing me in a tone, the sweetness of which made me start, so completely had I expected to find it harsh and disagreeable, "I have ventured to call upon you without permission, for I am desirous to express my gratitude for your kind consideration in my regard, and to assure you that I shall avail myself of the permission you have given me, with the same sincerity with which it has been offered."

I was somewhat embarrassed by this beginning, which upset all my plans, and still more was I disconcerted by the appearance of the Chevalier, so

different from the idea that I had formed of him. I stammered out a few polite words in reply, and at the same time placed chairs, without however too great an appearance of cordiality.

The young woman seated the General on one of them, and she remained standing at his side.

"If you wish to retire, Candelaria," said he, "this gentleman will, I am sure, have the kindness to assist me home in a short time; that is, if I do not intrude upon him now," making a movement as if to rise.

To this I could only reply by saying that I felt myself quite honoured by his visit. Whilst making this speech, to which I really felt compelled, his young companion left us.

"Sir," replied the General, "it is not from a foolish wish to appear polite, that I have called upon you in this manner, for that would not have been a sufficient motive for my indiscretion; but I was told that you had expressed yourself as feeling much interest respecting me, and I thought it due to myself to come and disclose to you the cause of the complete abandonment in which I am left by my companions in exile."

"I know the cause, General," replied I, "and must tell you, without reserve, that it had inspired me with resolutions which are very much shaken by the noble frankness of your proceedings. Can they have calumniated you?"

"They have not calumniated me, if they told you that it was I who caused my brother's death; but they have done so, if they did not add that since that day I have not enjoyed one moment's repose."

"I could have imagined that without your having told me so."

"I thank you for your kind opinion, young man," replied the General, with emotion. "I am not come here to apologise for an act which I regarded as a duty when a soldier, but which I have wept for as

a crime since my banishment; and if I say what I think, it appears to me to be more honourable to expose myself to the aversion of mankind than to force myself upon their esteem."

Then, without giving me time to reply, he related to me most circumstantially, not only everything with respect to the terrible fact before related, but also other events in which fate had obliged him to take a part. For five years, his life had been passed in a succession of truly fatal events, which had seldom allowed him the liberty of choice. He described to me, in the most forcible manner, the most striking point in the character of these people, which is to raise revenge into a virtue, and to consider moderation as apostasy.

"One party had," said he, "and possibly with justice, declared me a traitor to my country, while the other seemed always to doubt my fidelity to the cause I had embraced. On the field of battle, the eyes of the dying cast on me looks of hatred; while under the tents of my companions in arms, I could perceive mistrust even under words of studied politeness. Shall I say all, Sir?" he exclaimed; "yes, since this was the beginning of my long penance. Well! the day following the death of my unhappy brother, I was as much the object of suspicion as I was the previous evening, and I had the grief of hearing these terrible words,—‘He is a Spaniard; all this proves nothing.’"

The Chevalier's narrative continued for nearly two hours, without my attempting to interrupt him, and without a single expression being dropped by him which could betray the wish to lessen the enormity of what he called his crime. I was deeply interested by this kind of confession, and was becoming much moved when, after a moment's silence, the Chevalier resumed:—

"I wished to make you acquainted with all the circumstances, Sir, that you also might abandon the exile, if you did not judge him worthy of your pity. Now I am ready to return home," added he, rising, "will you conduct me to my door? If you do not feel disposed to do so, will you have the kindness to point out to me yours? I can then find my way by feeling the walls."

"There is another course open, General," replied I, seating him again in his arm-chair; "namely, to remain some little time longer with me; I will profit by this favour, to have some conversation with you on subjects less melancholy than those about which you have just been speaking."

His satisfaction at my remark was so evident, and at the same time so dignified, that you could perceive at once the feeling of pleasure displayed by an unhappy man receiving a favour; and the gratitude of a man of the world who accepts an invitation which is agreeable to him, and which he has every right to expect.

"You will permit me," said he, "to express myself pleased and happy at your proposal; but let me also tell you that it does not surprise me; how is it possible for one so young, not to be good?"

"Is that a reason?"

"Almost always at your age, persons suspect evil, yet, notwithstanding, excuse it; in after years they believe it, and know not how to forgive it;—they say that the only way men can atone for their own faults, is by being merciless to those of their fellows. But let us speak of yourself, as you have expressed a wish to converse on agreeable subjects."

He then asked me with great amiability, and much delicacy, a multitude of questions about my family, my country, my profession, my tastes, and in fact upon everything that could interest me.—I replied to all these questions with the frankness and thought-

lessness peculiar to my age; and in my turn made some inquiries about his young companion.

"On that subject," said he, "I know no more than you do; for I presume that those who have spoken to you about me, will have related also, that during my stay in the hospital of Pau, the chaplain of the house came to inform me that one of my countrywomen offered me the assistance of her eyes in exchange for that of my mouth: I accepted it, because I thought it was the will of God that I should be less unhappy, and the same day Candelaria came and took me to her house. Since then she has never quitted me."

"Have you made any attempts to discover who she is?"

"How could I do so? I am constantly alone with her, and she cannot reply to any of my questions. Besides, why try to penetrate the mystery of God's mercies? it is enough for me to know that I have always near me a guardian angel."

We conversed some time longer like old acquaintances, and when he rose to retire, before taking my arm, he seized my hand and pressed it warmly. I did not take him home, because Candelaria was waiting for him in the garden. You may well imagine that I returned to my room with very different ideas from those I had brought with me from the café some hours previously.

My intercourse with the Chevalier de Colombres became every day more intimate, and ultimately I devoted all my evenings to him. His conversation I found exceedingly charming; his dignity in misfortune, and the sincerity of his repentance, inspired me with an interest which insensibly changed into feelings of affection.

Candelaria was rarely with us, for she always retired when she did not think her presence necessary,

and I, like my old friend, came at last to the conclusion that she really was his guardian angel. To such a length was this carried that I often passed her without saluting her.

At the commencement of the winter, the Chevalier became ill from the effects of cold ; and as I saw that he was himself very indifferent to his sufferings, I thought it my duty to bring the Surgeon-Major of my regiment to see him, without previously informing him of my intention. At first he made some objections to seeing him, but on my urging him to do so, for my own satisfaction, he consented, and the doctor was introduced.

It was evening—the room was faintly lighted by a small lamp, and the physician asked for a candle, that he might examine his patient with more accuracy. Candelaria brought one, and when she placed it before the Chevalier, the doctor and I both perceived that the light appeared to affect the sight of his eyes, which we had imagined gone for ever. Thanks to the great care of Monsieur Derivière, (that was the name of our Surgeon-Major,) my old friend recovered very quickly. When he was quite convalescent, I went one evening to beg him to come and breakfast with me the following morning ; he consented in the most courteous manner imaginable ; and at the hour agreed upon, I went myself to fetch him. Having asked the General's permission, I had invited Mons. Derivière to meet the Chevalier, and the breakfast passed off in the most agreeable manner. My poor friend had never appeared so calm, nor had shown himself so thoroughly amiable. His politeness induced him to appear happy at his recovery, though life to him must have been a burden. As he constantly recurred to the gratitude he felt for the kindness and attention he had received from the doctor, the latter said to him :—

“General, it is very true that I cured you of the pleurisy, and I am delighted at it; but there is something else, which would confer real honour on me, and at the same time give me infinitely more pleasure; viz. to restore your sight. I feel confident that nothing would be easier, if you would consent to submit to a slight operation, which would be unattended by danger, and cause but very little pain.”

“I fear neither pain nor danger, my dear doctor,” replied the Chevalier; “but I am accustomed to my infirmity, and to be deprived of sight is a subject of little regret to a poor exile like myself.”

“But think,” said I, “that your exile may cease at any time; and then of how much joy you will be deprived if you cannot see that country which is so dear to you!”

“I have no country! you know that well, my young friend; and it is on that account, that I am not anxious about my sight. Indeed, I should look upon it as a favour not to be permitted to return to Spain, for I had condemned myself to banishment before I knew of the existence of the law that banished me.”

“I will not press it,” said the doctor, “but should you change your mind, pray remember that I am always at your service.”

The General thanked him, and immediately turned the conversation. The doctor soon after left us, to pay his daily visit to the hospital.

When the Chevalier and I were alone, I asked him why he refused a thing, which, supposing him to be indifferent to it himself, would be the cause of so much pleasure to me, and would prove so great a relief to his dear Candelaria.

“Because my calamity is a punishment sent by God, and therefore it is not the province of man to endeavour to remove it. I have been blind now

nearly three years, and during that time have been quite aware that it was capable of cure, and therefore I bless Heaven who has granted me the favour of a voluntary expiation."

"General," replied I, struck with admiration at the nobleness of such repentance, and at the tenderness of such a conscience, "the trial has lasted long enough; and now that you have the advice of a physician, you ought perhaps to consult a priest, to ascertain whether your constancy to this idea may not be an abuse of the Divine mercy, or the indulgence of human pride."

"Young man," said he, with emotion, "you have brought forward arguments, which cause me much disquietude. It is true, that if God has forgiven me, I may be acting like a proud man who obstinately clings to punishment when Providence intends it otherwise."

"You should not have doubted of this pardon from the day when Providence sent you the angel whose eyes have guided and whose devotedness has consoled you."

"But suppose I were to lose her on the recovery of my sight, the deprivation of which, through her kind attentions, I have hardly perceived?"

"It would be another indication of the will of Heaven."

"Listen, my young friend," said the Chevalier, with great animation. "Heaven is my witness, that for myself I have no wish to revisit that land that I have stained with the blood of my brother. But I will consent to this test, and if it confirm you in the opinion that I ought to submit to the operation, I will no longer resist. Go for Candelaria; inform her of what the doctor has suggested, and if it appear to give her pleasure, I will do all you wish, and when you wish."

In five minutes Candelaria was at the General's side, and I narrowly observed her countenance.

"My child," said he, "the doctor who so skilfully attended me during my illness, hopes to be able to restore my sight. What do you advise me to do?"

Candelaria threw herself on her knees, her hands raised towards heaven. She opened her lips; I thought she was going to speak.

"Her countenance looks radiant," said I to the Chevalier.

"You will not leave me if they cure me?" continued he, with an anxious expression.

Candelaria seized the hands of the banished man, and covered them with kisses.

"My friend," said he to me, "inform the doctor that he may come when he pleases; I am ready."

The doctor came, and it was decided that after a preliminary treatment, the operation should be performed the following Sunday. It was then Tuesday.

The day fixed for the operation arrived: I waited for it, as you may imagine, with great impatience, and I went to the Chevalier's some moments before the hour appointed for the attendance of the physician. The General was seated in a large arm-chair placed before a window; his hands clasped, his brow more pensive than usual. His whole bearing showed that his mind was engaged in meditation and prayer. Candelaria was on her knees before him; her countenance beaming with tenderness and hope.

"This is a happy day for your friends," said I to Colombres.

He took my hand and pressed it, without uttering a word.

"You are aware," added I, "that as soon as we know that the operation has succeeded, your eyes will be covered with a bandage, which will be

lessened every day, in order that you may by degrees become accustomed to the light."

"When I have seen Candelaria, yourself, and the sun, I can be patient," said he to me, with a sweet smile.

Then his countenance suddenly changed, and placing his hand upon the head of Candelaria, who was still kneeling at his feet, continued:—

"I would much rather hear her voice than see again the light of day."

She looked at me with an expression which I could not comprehend until some time afterwards: besides, the doctor entered at the moment, and all my thoughts were fixed upon what was going to take place. The preparations for the operation having been made beforehand, Mons. Derivière placed his patient in a convenient position, and, putting into my hands some instruments which he would require, began immediately. Five or six minutes passed; they appeared to me like an age. The General did not breathe a word, nor utter a sigh.

"The operation is completed," said the doctor; "tell me if you can see."

The General cast down his eyes, met the gaze of Candelaria, made an exclamation of surprise, and fainted.

"He has recognised me," said the young girl, clasping her hands; "my God be praised!"

The doctor turned round in amazement. As for me, I could scarcely believe the evidence of my senses.

"There is a great deal of mystery in all this," said the doctor, recovering himself. "While waiting for it to be cleared up, we will now take advantage of the General's fainting fit to put on the bandage which he must wear for some days. We shall see after that what it will be necessary to do."

Whilst this was being done, the General recovered his consciousness. "Take off this bandage," said he; "I must see her again! see her, and die!"

"Be calm, General," said Mons. Derivière; "what you have seen you will see again; but if you thus agitate yourself, I cannot answer for the consequences."

"It is not an angel who is near me," said the exile, "it is a saint! it is Bernadette, my brother's only daughter! now I see that God has forgiven me. . . . But where are you, my child? let me press you to my heart."

"I am at your feet, where I return thanks to Heaven for having answered my prayer. Forgive me, uncle," said she, throwing her arms round his neck; "I came to you for the purpose of revenging my father; your repentance has taught me forgiveness; God is with us. I am no longer an orphan, and you are no longer exiled."

In 1822, a decree of the Cortez recalled all the refugees to their country. In 1823, at the time that King Ferdinand entered Madrid, Bernadette de Colombres demanded of him the pardon of her uncle in consideration of the services of her father.

"Ask it on account of your own virtues," replied the King. "For your sake I name your uncle Governor of Corunna."

It was in this town that the Chevalier de Colombres died a few years ago, at a very advanced age. Bernadette never left him.

STEPHEN KRISMER.

STEPHEN KRISMER.

A TALE OF THE TYROL.

JANA, the sister and housekeeper of Stephen Krismer, curate¹ of the little village of See, in the Tyrol, had just entered the room with a letter in her hand, which she laid before her brother, who was at that moment drinking a glass of wine with his friend, the co-operator of the parish. "Where does this letter come from?" inquired he, as he took it up and examined it attentively.

"The smith has just now brought it from Landek," she replied; and then taking up the empty flask from the table, she went to fill it anew in the cellar.

"Surely," said the curate, in a soliloquising tone, "this is the miller of Brennbüchel's writing. What can have happened?" While he spoke he opened the letter, and began to read it aloud, interrupting himself every now and then to comment on its contents:—

"DEAR HERR STEPHEN,—

"The gun has long been loaded, now it is about to be fired: ('What! is it possible that they are

¹ It may be necessary to acquaint our English readers, that in foreign countries the *Curate* is the parish priest; his assistant, if he has any, being called by different titles in different places, as *Vicare* in France and Belgium, *Kooperator* in the Tyrol, &c.

going to fight again already?") I am unable any longer to approach my own fireside with my pipe, for the whole kitchen is full of women, tarts, and puddings. With the blessing of God, they will be a happy couple. ('Ah, indeed, this is it? My spiritual¹ bride Hannah has another bridegroom!') On Carnival-Monday they are to be married. ('On Carnival-Monday! to-morrow! and I have had no invitation until now!') It is true, dear Herr Stephen, that you have often promised Hannah that you would tie the holy knot, and pronounce the nuptial benediction, and the bride weeps much that this cannot be. ('Cannot be! And wherefore? what is to prevent it?') Captain H——, whom you lately offended so much, when you were with the people of Arz at the skirmish near the long bridge, is now quartered in the village inn close by; and he storms and swears, that if you should chance to fall into his hands, he will send you in chains to Munich. Therefore, we entreat you to remain at home, and to remember the bridal pair and all of us in your prayers. God be with you! Your old friend,

"JOHN NEURUERER, *Miller.*"

"That would be a fine story, indeed!" said the curate, when he had finished reading; "I not marry them! Only think, Jana," he added, addressing his sister, who at that moment came in and set the wine-flask on the table,—"only think; the miller of Brennbüchel's daughter Hannah is to be married to-morrow, and I shall not be there!" Throwing

¹ To understand this phrase it is necessary to observe, that it is the custom in some parts of the Tyrol for a priest, when he first celebrates mass, to choose some little girl from among the children of his acquaintance to assist at the ceremony. She kneels within the sanctuary, dressed in holiday attire, crowns the chalice with flowers, and, we believe, assists in other ways; during the rest of her life she is supposed to have a special claim on the kind offices of the priest, and is sometimes called his spiritual bride.

the letter from him, he strode up and down the room in an agitated manner, while the housekeeper folded her arms, and gazed at her brother with some surprise.

"And why cannot you be at the wedding?" she demanded.

"Vexatious! provoking!" was the only answer she could obtain from him. But suddenly his face began to brighten; he swallowed hastily a mouthful of wine, and looked towards the clock.

"Just twelve o'clock," he said aloud; "at half-past one I shall be in Piams, at half-past two in Landek; there I can take a pony, if I find no other conveyance. At seven o'clock I shall be in Brennbüchel."

"But, Herr Curate," interrupted the co-operator, "bethink yourself of the risk you run in this expedition."

"Are you also a child?" replied Herr Stephen, laughing, as he hastened out of the room and went upstairs to his chamber.

The good kind-hearted Jana was not a little terrified by the words which the co-operator had uttered, who now taking up the letter read it aloud to her, while she listened with anxiety. When he had finished, they both agreed that the journey was decidedly a dangerous one, and they resolved to do all they could to dissuade the curate from attempting it. Jana, already trembling in every limb, went upstairs with a beating heart to seek her brother. He had in the meanwhile taken off his robe, put on his new velvet waistcoat, then his well-kept primizrock¹ of fine blue cloth, and finally his smooth grey cloak over all. As his sister entered, he was just taking the money-bag from the cupboard, and putting a few

¹ The coat worn by a priest on the day that he says his first mass.

dollars and zwanzigers into his pocket. Poor Jana stood motionless before him, gazing at him in mute terror, while the tears rolled from her eyes; but it was not till he stretched out his hand to reach down from the peg on which it hung his wide felt hat with silk tassels, that she threw herself into his arms and cried, "For God's sake, brother! for God's sake, do not go!"

At the same moment the co-operator also entered the room, and said, "Herr Curate, remain here, and give up this journey."

The good curate, thus pressed on both sides, twirled his hat round and round in his hand, and smiled as he replied, "You are foolish people; do not hinder me. As it is, I have little time to waste."

"I beg you, in God's name, to remain," cried poor Jana, sobbing aloud, as she covered her face with her apron; while the co-operator added in a serious tone,—

"You expose yourself unnecessarily to an evident danger, Herr Stephen."

"Where is the danger?" answered the good curate; "was not an amnesty guaranteed to us? Who has any right to lay hands on me, or even to threaten me? I have given a promise to my spiritual bride that I would perform this ceremony, and I see no real hindrance to prevent me from doing so."

"But," persisted the co-operator, "the bride herself, as well as her parents, wish you to remain at home under the circumstances."

"Because they are too anxious on account of me," replied Herr Stephen. "But if I do not appear, a cloud will hang over all the festivities; a feeling of oppression and restraint will come upon them, and they will say one to another, 'It is a shame that we cannot even celebrate a wedding as we wish.' Do you think the bride will be able to restrain her tears?"

She will sit by the bridegroom with a sad countenance, and no one will be really serene and cheerful at heart. It is the will of God that nuptial festivities should be observed with joy; and as Christ was pleased to ennoble the wedding in Cana of Galilee by his presence, so will I, as a servant and messenger of the Lord, be present at and enliven in a Christian manner this marriage at Brennbüchel. It may even happen that I may be able in this way to put an end to the unjust threats of that Bavarian braggart."

"But look at poor Jana," answered the co-operator; "surely you should consider your own sister more than them; and even if all ends happily, you will cause her, meanwhile, much anxiety on your account, which you could so easily spare her."

At these words Jana began to weep still more vehemently. Then Herr Stephen put on a serious look, and spoke with more energy than before.

"Dear sister," said he, "do not follow your own opinion merely, but believe my words; I apprehend no danger from this affair. I do not undertake the journey for idle amusement, but to fulfil my promise, and for an end which God will certainly approve. Of this I am assured by the peace and joy of my heart, and this inward voice has never yet betrayed me. I will leave the key of the money-box here on the bench, and the day after to-morrow, by God's help, I will be here again. Herr Co-operator, I need not remind you to watch over our flock during my absence; and now—farewell."

He already had his office-book under his arm, and his Spanish ivory-topped cane in his hand; and sprinkling himself and the two others with holy water, he put on his hat and departed. The co-operator and the housekeeper followed him slowly to the door, and gazed after him in silence until he was out of sight.

As soon as Herr Stephen had left behind him the few houses which formed the little village of See, he put his stick under his arm, made the sign of the cross, and began to recite the office, looking in his book from time to time. Notwithstanding this occupation, he walked at a tolerably quick pace along the rough path through the valley, only interrupting his devotions for a few moments at the dangerous parts of the descent, and then immediately resuming them. In two hours he reached the little village of Piams, and perceived with pleasure, as he approached the principal inn, that a handsome double-seated sledge was standing at the door, the pole of which was turned in the direction of Landek. He stood still, and supporting himself on his stick, patiently awaited the arrival of the ostler, who was in the act of leading out the fiery noble-looking steed.

"Quirin," said Herr Stephen to the man, "who owns this sledge?"

"God greet you, Herr Curate," replied the ostler, "it belongs to an officer."

"To an officer?" said Herr Stephen, musingly; and then added, "Does he travel alone?"

"Yes," replied Quirin, "he does; but this is all I know of him."

During this exchange of words, a stately officer walked out of the inn-door, stroked his moustaches, and lighted his pipe. The clergyman looked up at him with a deliberating countenance, but it was not till the horse was put to the carriage, and the officer had descended the steps of the inn, and let fall the trinkgeld into the ostler's hands, that Herr Stephen drew near to him, and said rather hesitatingly,—

"With your permission, Herr Captain. It is certainly very rude of me, but I must be in Imst to-day, and the road"—

"Ah, I understand your reverence," replied the

officer courteously; "with much pleasure. Take your seat; I am going that way also."

Herr Stephen, who was a slight, active little man, swung himself lightly into the sledge beside the officer, who now took the reins and whip; and with "Alloh! Braun, Alloh!" they flew off at a good speed.

After a few minutes' silence, the officer thus commenced the conversation: "Your reverence is probably the Herr Priest of Imst?" he said inquiringly.

"No, Herr Captain," replied the other smiling.

"But you are of that country?" continued the officer.

"My home is in the village of Karres, just above Brennbühel," said the priest.

"Ah, that is very good," answered the officer; "you can then go with me as far as Brennbühel."

"May God reward you for your kindness," replied Herr Stephen.

"Your confidence in a Bavarian officer," said the other, "and your freedom from prejudice, which you manifest by thus openly driving with me through the villages, prove to me that you are not one of those narrow-minded and stubborn clergymen, who do little credit to their high office, and draw down no blessing upon the parishes committed to their care. Excuse me for expressing myself honestly, but it is a fact, that the parsons of Tyrol (let it be well understood, I do not mean the priests, but the parsons) have brought more fagots to this burning than any other class of society. Instead of peace, they have preached up hatred; instead of obedience, rebellion. Many of them have left the altar, and placed themselves at the head of factions; and their hands, which ought to be raised pure to heaven, have been stained with blood. If I were at the head of affairs, I should know well where and on whom to inflict punishments. Why

are you silent? do you disapprove of what I am saying?"

"On the contrary, Herr Captain," replied the good curate, "I think that your displeasure against many priests of our country is quite natural."

"Not far from Piams," continued the officer, with some warmth, "in the refractory Patznaun, the ecclesiastical and temporal authorities tolerate just such a wolf among the flock as I have been describing."

The curate rubbed his reddened cheeks and said, "You mean, perhaps, Stephen Krismer of See."

"The very same," answered the officer. "Do you know him intimately?"

"As well as I do myself," replied Herr Stephen.

"Indeed!" said his companion; "I have sworn to arrest him as soon as he falls into my hands."

"With your permission," replied Herr Stephen, speaking as composedly as he could, "may I ask by what crime he has excited your anger so much?"

"Is it possible that you can ask such a question, when you know him so well?" demanded the officer with some surprise; "and you were probably curate of Karres before last November? He stirred up the inhabitants of Arz to rise against the government; he drove out the fanatical people against us, against me myself, and he prepared a murderous fire to prevent my advance, so that it was in fact impossible. Moreover, the parson behaved with insolence and impertinence in the transaction, and therefore his reward shall not be forgotten."

"I understand," replied the curate, "that Stephen Krismer's only purpose was to serve his fellow-countrymen as army chaplain, for which office he procured episcopal permission. As he returned in the beginning of November over the mountains to his curacy, after the occurrences at Innsbruck, the rifle-shooters, then collected at Arz, stopped him; and instead of acting

up to his exhortations to maintain peace, they insisted upon his becoming their commander. This he refused. They then presented their arquebuses, and threatened to shoot him if he did not gratify them. To save his life, and to prevent the murder of a priest, he accommodated himself to the necessity of the moment."

"Of the moment?" said the officer scornfully; "that is hard to believe, when only a few days later he did his best to kindle rebellion and war in the very place where he was set up for the administration of Christian peace and loyalty. The madman went so far as to send mothers and daughters into the combat, and, as it is said, he even armed his own sister. How can freedom be allowed to such a monster?"

"But, Herr Captain," remonstrated the curate, "the general amnesty protects him."

"He is a dangerous man," replied the other; "and the lawful authorities have a full right, and indeed are positively obliged, to see that he shall not have the power of doing any more mischief. New occasions are not wanted to justify my interference. I have long called the attention of the colonel a Lundek towards him. Not long ago we had information that he was endeavouring to call forth anew the spirit of insurrection, by means of preaching and conventicle discourses, and that he had even deposited arms in the church-vaults. Some of our officers went into Schloss Wiesberg to collect more particular information. Hear what chanced. On that very day the parson had appointed a meeting with a neighbouring priest for mutual confession at that same house, and he was even then in the parlour."

"And did not the officers take him prisoner?" asked the curate.

"As soon as he perceived the military at the door," continued the officer, "he took the leather cap from the head of a shoemaker who was accidentally at work there, covered his tonsure with it, flung off his coat, and, as the officers entered, industriously bored at the leather with his awl, stooping down the while, so that his collar was not visible. Thus he had the enjoyment of hearing all the inquiries which were made concerning him. This anecdote spread through the country like wildfire. After this warning, it was easy for the villain to convey away to surer hiding-places every thing that could betray him. He even had the boldness to appear before the landgericht (magistrate) with eighteen of his parishioners, not only to clear himself by the exterior forms of legality, but also to vent his anger by complaints of the pretended calumnies on the part of the soldiers. In spite of all this, the wily fox shall not escape us; and I have this very day been concerting measures with the major at Piams, which cannot fail of success."

"But, Herr Captain," replied the curate, "I do not believe Stephen Krismer will do any thing which deserves punishment. The circumstances of the time must surely excuse his former behaviour, for it was the people who forced him to join them."

"Yes, truly," answered the officer, "the people resemble animals in their instinct; they soon understand who sympathises with them. And indeed no priests of any worth or learning joined the rebels, but only the uncivilized parsons, who are imbued with the same prejudices and passions as the mob. It is said that the insurrectionary proclamations were only sent to ecclesiastics of a secondary grade, who, being taken from among the people, are only raised above them by their consecration to the priesthood.

And a worthy specimen of this class Stephen Krismer appears to be."

"I quite agree with you," replied the curate, "that Stephen Krismer has no claim to be reckoned among the learned. He was nearly twenty years old when, by the kind assistance of the rich miller of Brennbühel, he was enabled to commence his studies for holy orders, after having been employed during the whole of his previous life in tending goats and in manual labour. You have doubtless heard of Falkensteiner, the pious confessor of the nuns at Bruneck, who, in order to remedy the great want which then existed of additional priests, introduced a new method of education, which enabled students to go through their course in a much shorter time than before. He had under him seventy or eighty students, and any clergyman who comes from that institution is called in Tyrol a Falkensteiner. Stephen Krismer is one of these; he drinks from the spring rather than from the pitcher; he draws knowledge from God and from nature rather than from books and systems. It was because he was always more inclined to an active life than to solitary study, and also because he was not deficient in courage, that he became army chaplain; and having been once drawn in, as it were, by his clerical duties, to undertake the cause, it was but natural that the peasants should wish to employ him rather than any one else in their meditated enterprise."

During this speech the captain had several times regarded his companion with a searching and suspicious look, and he now said scornfully,—“It seems to me that you are endeavouring to make an apology for Stephen Krismer, and to excuse all his misconduct and lawless behaviour.”

Here the good Herr Stephen laughed heartily as he replied, “I assure you, Herr Captain, there is

no one in this world whom I value less than Stephen Krismer."

At these words the officer, with an expression of joyful surprise on his countenance, turned towards him in a friendly manner, and shaking him warmly by the hand, exclaimed, "Excellent, your reverence! I have no doubt also that you will agree with me and with all sensible people, in the conviction that the Tyrolese insurrection was no other than a crime and an execrable rebellion. Now what do you think? Speak honestly, and I will not take offence."

"Do you really wish me to speak honestly?" asked the curate.

"Without any hesitation," replied the other; "I give you my word of honour."

"Why, then," demanded Herr Stephen, "do you consider the late resistance of the Tyrolese to be a criminal insurrection?"

"Why?" replied the captain; "because the subject owes obedience to his sovereign."

"It is true," said Herr Stephen, "that at the peace of Presburg the Emperor Francis issued his commands that we should become Bavarian subjects; but with our ancient constitution, and with the liberties and established rights which we inherited from our forefathers. The King of Bavaria promised not to alter a single iota of our constitution, and above all to protect religion. But how has he kept his oath? We all know what happened. The bishops were banished from their dioceses; the most pious and learned priests were imprisoned; our ritual torn from the hands of the Church and destroyed; our states were done away with; our young men stolen away from their homes, to the ruin of body and soul; all established order was overturned, and Tyrol degenerated into a mere Bavarian province, destitute of privileges, and oppressed on all sides."

“Oh ho!” cried the Bavarian officer; “these are your sentiments, are they? But never mind; go on without fear.”

“The Emperor Francis,” continued Herr Stephen, “gave us up to Bavaria under certain conditions. Can the commands of our rightful lord still remain valid, when those conditions have been utterly disregarded? No! and the Emperor Francis himself has called to us. The King of Bavaria has not kept the conditions of the contract, and therefore the contract is dissolved; we are loosed from our duty to Bavaria, and we once again belong to the Imperial house, as we have done for five centuries and a half. The Tyrolese have revolted in a spirit of loyalty, not of faithlessness.”

“Reverend sir,” returned the officer seriously, “I did not expect to hear such principles from your lips. You Tyrolese are indeed a fanatical and blinded people. The burning of your huts and villages once has not been sufficient, I perceive, to remove the darkness from your eyes. Can you not understand that when thrones rest upon a dead letter, they are more unsteady than chaff before the wind? When a government guides the rudder with fettered hands, the ship of the state is dashed to pieces, and its rulers perish with it. When subjects prescribe laws to the ruler, how shall he govern them? Is he to be the servant, and they his masters? No, by my sword!” he added fiercely, tearing his bright blade half way out of the scabbard, and then thrusting it violently back again; “such an infringement of the rights of majesty, such a chaotic confusion of all natural order, shall never be borne, as long as true and gallant soldiers surround their monarch.”

“But only consider the consequences,” replied the priest. “When the holiest conditions of the most solemn contracts and treaties of peace are trodden

under foot ; when the rights of subjects are no longer respected ; and ——”

“ We give you better for worse,” interrupted the captain. vehemently, “ and you call it an encroachment on your rights. Will you Tyrolese be as immovable as your mountains? Will you never accommodate yourselves to the times? Will you not advance with the age? Answer me this, reverend sir.”

“ Herr Captain,” replied the curate earnestly, “ I do not wish to enter into a learned discussion, whether the present representation of the people or an established parliament is most desirable ; nor whether, in secular matters, the new or old system is the best ; this I cannot decide ; but my heart tells me that much which Bavaria inflicts upon us is crying to Heaven for vengeance ; and that the Emperor Francis is justified in declaring his former cession of Tyrol invalid, after so gross a violation of the stipulations then made, is evident to my simple understanding : and if you, Herr Captain, were a Tyrolese, I feel convinced that you would be one of the most valiant defenders of our country.”

“ Your opinion, reverend sir, is very flattering,” returned the captain courteously.

“ Do not be offended,” continued Herr Stephen, “ with my view of the subject. It is my candid opinion, and I cannot think otherwise. You have permitted me to speak frankly to you in confidence.”

“ You need not fear,” said the officer. “ But tell me, how could you, entertaining such sentiments, speak with disapprobation of Stephen Krismer? Perhaps you only wish to take the part of the people, while you justly blame those priests who, leaving the pure atmosphere of their heavenly calling, sink down in the mire of such worldly affairs, and even mix themselves up in political quarrels. Have I guessed rightly?”

"You must pardon me, Herr Captain," replied the priest. "The Church, it is true, forbids the priest to carry arms himself, or to shed blood. But as the priest is required by his holy office to encourage his people in the performance of *all* their duties, so is he bound to fulfil this obligation in regard to their allegiance towards their fatherland and their monarch; and were he silent on this subject, it would be a grievous omission in his priestly labours. And when duty leads the peaceable inhabitants to murderous combats, and calls upon them for the sacrifice of their lives and property, shall a conscientious priest at such a moment grow dumb? or dare he desert his own in the hour of danger? Must he not then more than ever stimulate, strengthen, and animate them? Shall he not, where it is possible, share with them fatigues and dangers, assist the wounded and dying, and administer the consolations of religion on the field of battle and in the hospital?"

"Without a doubt," replied the officer, "when the cause is a just one, and duty clear as the day."

"Their duty was never doubtful to the Tyrolese," replied the curate with emphasis.

"Allowing this to be true," returned the officer, "there must be some other reason, then, which makes you bear a grudge against Stephen Krismer. Is he quarrelsome in his private life as well as in his public?"

"I must beg you not to press me any further on this subject," said the curate.

"Well, well," answered the other, "if I can at any time take your part against him, I am at your service: we shall be near neighbours; my quarters are at the Gasthaus in Brennbüchel."

"I have nothing to fear from Stephen Krismer," replied the curate; "but I own that another enemy causes me great uneasiness, although I am innocent."

He dwells in Brennbühel, and may perhaps insult me this very day ; in which case I beg for your protection."

"Here is my hand," replied the other warmly ; "whoever he may be, I will chastise him. Though we differ in opinion, I cannot mistake your principles, and I honour the openness with which you have spoken."

During this conversation the sledge had been rapidly traversing the valley, and, leaving behind one village after another, had now arrived at the Milser Höpe, from whence the little village of Brennbühel could be discerned in the depth below at the foot of the mountain. The approaching wedding of the miller's daughter was now spoken of, and before long they drove by the miller's house ; and the horse, shaking his harness, stood before the inn-door.

The captain's servant hastened to meet them ; and the curate, slipping a half-krone into his hand, much to his surprise, thanked the captain for his courtesy in a simple and friendly manner. The hostess, who was a daughter of the miller's, came out to receive the guests, and turned pale with fright when she saw Herr Stephen so close to his greatest enemy : she anxiously peeped under his cloak to see if his arms were bound ; but no chains were visible. The curate took an early opportunity to impress upon her that she must on no account allow any one to address him by his name ; and seating himself down to a glass of wine in company with his fellow-traveller, they carried on an easy and friendly conversation.

Great confusion meanwhile pervaded the miller's house. His son had chanced to see the Herr Curate drive by at the captain's side. He immediately rushed into the room where the bride and her two sisters were arranging the dresses and garlands for the approaching festivity, and screamed out,—“ Herr

Stephen is taken prisoner! The captain has just brought him in!" The poor maidens stood aghast. The garlands and dresses fell to the ground; they wrung their hands, and with loud laments hastened to tell the dreadful news to their mother; and from her they went to their father, who had locked himself up in the little empty kitchen in the upper floor, and was busily engaged in the forbidden employment of casting bullets, which brought certain death to every living thing at which they were aimed by the miller's skilful hand. The three maidens knocked with mournful clamour at the door, but received no answer. "The Herr Stephen has been brought hither in chains." Still no answer. At last, after much entreaty and loud knocking, the door was unlocked; and the stout old man came forth, holding in his hand twelve newly-cast bullets. He greeted his daughters with a harsh rebuke; but when he heard the strange intelligence he shook his head doubtfully, and said hastily and with warmth, "My bullets, then, were not made by chance." But when his anger had subsided a little, he and his wife and his well-grown sons deliberated what was best to be done. He dressed himself in his holiday coat, with the intention of going to the inn himself, and in case of necessity remonstrating with the Herr Captain.

He opened the house-door, and — Stephen Krismer walked in! A shout of joy overpowered the curate's warm greeting; and by the earnest demands of his friends as to how he had obtained his freedom, he quickly perceived the mistake under which they laboured, and immediately explained the whole adventure to them. After a short conversation he requested the miller to invite the captain to dine with them on the morrow, that so the joke might conclude.

"Herr Stephen, Herr Stephen," replied the miller,

“you are a bold man to remain here!” and he laughed until his sides shook. He accompanied the curate to the captain’s apartment, and gave him an agreeable surprise by inviting him to the wedding-feast. Of his own accord the captain offered them the use of the cannon, that nothing might be wanting to celebrate the festivity with suitable eclat.

The religious ceremony took place in the festively adorned chapel, in presence of a crowd of curious sight-loving people. Herr Stephen married them, his countenance beaming with joy. At the festive repast the clergyman was seated on the right hand, and the soldier on the left of the bridal pair. The priest was extremely lively. Toasts went round; the cannon sent forth their loudest report. The captain rose from his seat, and holding his full glass towards his fellow-traveller, cried out, “The Herr Curate of Karres! Vivat!” Stephen Krismer smiled. The guests had, it is true, been well instructed that the curate was not known to the officer; but for all that they were taken by surprise, and looked at each other with much alarm.

“Are you not, then, the curate of Karres?” demanded the officer.

The curate rose from his chair, stood boldly upright, and holding his glass on high, replied,—“It is true that I was born at Karres; but I am the curate, not of Karres, but—of See in Patznaun. Stephen Krismer drinks to the prosperity of the Herr Captain! Vivat!”

The captain remained standing as if petrified; at last he let his glass gradually sink upon the table, and exclaimed,—“So cunning a rogue I never before met with in all my life.”

Krismer now whispered a word in the bride’s ear. She blushed, and taking up the glass with a trem-

bling hand, said,—“Herr Captain, the bride begs a pardon for the Herr Stephen.”

The soldier gently touched her glass with his own; and while the bride sipped the wine, he answered, “Who can deny any thing to the amiable bride?” and raising the glass on high, cried out, “Pardon and reconciliation.” Then he struck it against the clergyman’s glass until it echoed again; and the whole company arose with the unanimous cry, “Long live the Herr Captain and the Herr Stephen!”

“In case of need I should have claimed your promised protection!” said the priest, smiling, to the officer, as he seated himself.

During all this bustle it was hardly perceived that a maiden in anything but bridal attire had been forcibly dragged into the room by one of the miller’s daughters. This was Jana, the curate’s sister. “What dost thou here? How camest thou hither?” asked her brother, with some astonishment. The miller’s daughter now related that poor Jana had been driven by anxiety to leave her home in Patznaun, and come all the way to Brennbüchel. She was forced to take a seat and join in the festivities.

The captain looked at her steadfastly, and then exclaimed,—“So! The very same maiden who a short time ago so courageously fired at our people in the Patznaun valley!”

“The very same,” answered the old miller, with a waggish laugh; and lifting up his glass he cried, “With your permission, Herr Captain. Long live the gallant defenders of See!” The toast was received with boisterous clamour, and even the captain clapped applause. The old man suddenly recollected himself; and giving with both hands a sign for silence, he thus spoke, addressing himself to the

officer: "As you, Herr Captain, have to-day been reconciled to Herr Stephen, and sit at our table in a friendly way, so shall all the Tyrolese and Bavarians extend their hands to each other." "Bravo!" cried the officer, and immediately stretched out his hand over the table. The old man shook it with right good will, while the side door of the apartment flew open, and the musicians of Imster were admitted, drowning all other sounds by their own joyous melodies.

THE
CONSCRIPT OF BAGNOLET.

IN the pleasant valley which extends between Montreuil and Romainville, stands the little village of Bagnolet. As is the case in most of the environs of Paris, those of its inhabitants who are employed in husbandry, contribute each their part to supply the capital with provisions; which, like an immense gulf, swallows up the produce of the soil for fifty leagues around.

Nicolas, the son of a husbandman of the above-mentioned village, strong, active, and good looking, had just attained his twentieth year. Unlike many of the peasants, who know nothing of religion but the steeple which surmounts their village, and the curé who baptizes, marries, and buries them, Nicolas, who had been better brought up, and better instructed, faithfully practised all the duties of his station, and was held in general esteem by the inhabitants of the village.

The time of conscription arrived, and Nicolas, having no desire for a military life, looked forward to the period of drawing with dismay. He had, in truth, very sufficient reasons; for his father and mother, already advanced in years, had need of his help; moreover, in the country they marry young, and Nicolas, after the drawing was over, was to

espouse Margaret, the daughter of père Mathieu, a fine comely person with rustic charms, and a rosy complexion. How, under these circumstances, should he not regard with horror the prospect of seven years service in the army, or rather the possible chance of a premature death, glorious perhaps, but still far from pleasant, among the Bedouins of Africa.

It was to avoid this misfortune that Césaire, an old shepherd of the country, and an old sorcerer to boot, came one day to offer Nicolas a spell, which, he said, was a preservative against an unlucky number. The talisman, according to his account, was infallible.

The temptation was strong, and Nicolas hesitated for a moment; but his good sense and good principles resumed their power over him, and he replied, "I have no need of your spells, my old man; I put my trust in God; one prayer to Him will be better than all your spells."

"Ah! you believe so?" said Césaire.

"Yes, I believe it."

"Well! we shall see," and looking down upon him with a contemptuous sneer, the sorcerer withdrew.

In the meantime, the expected day arrived, and Nicolas, with a tranquil mind, directed his way towards the place of drawing. It was not, however, without some apprehension that he plunged his hand into the fatal bag; he drew it out slowly; alas! his countenance changes—he becomes pale;—he has the number *three*! But his despair increased still more when, on the termination of the drawing, he found that it had fallen upon him alone of the four conscripts of his village. His three companions, who were freethinkers in religion, had had recourse to the old Césaire, and they had succeeded.

It is needless to describe the sarcasms of which poor Nicolas was the butt,—the coarse and stinging jests which were aimed at him. For several days he

concealed his despair in the retirement of his cottage, not daring to show himself, or to go out, and, at the same time, receiving the most sensible blow of all from the reproaches of his own family. The old shepherd, on the contrary, was carried in triumph all over the village, and was received with applause and bumpers of wine at every public-house which they passed.

“Long live Césaire!” “Down with the curé!” such were the cries that were heard resounding in the midst of the noise of glasses; and though Monsieur le curé did not feel at all disposed to lay down his arms before the sorcerer, yet he knew not well what to answer,—the fact was evident to all the villagers.

As for Nicolas, a still greater mortification awaited him. There are trials and afflictions of an external tenor against which we can bear up manfully, especially when we place our trust in God; but there are others which must have vent, and against which it is in vain to seek to fortify oneself beforehand, for they have their rise in the deepest feelings of the heart. Nicolas, then, was abandoning himself to the keenest distress, when suddenly some one knocked at the door. He opened; it was Father Mathieu.

“Well, my poor Nicolas,” said he, as he entered, “fortune has not favoured you.”

“Ah, no! Father Mathieu; that is my grief.”

“Well, you have yourself to blame. You disdained the old Césaire, and would not do as the others did; and all this to save a few sous!”

A mist passed over the eyes of Nicolas:—thus to have his sentiments misconstrued, it was too much.

“In fine,” added Mathieu, assuming the tone of a teacher, “to great evils we must apply great remedies. Take my advice: go, do your part as a brave man . . . Who knows,—perhaps it is the road

which will conduct you to fortune—to glory. You know the old saying,—

“‘Les soldats font des généraux;
Et plus d’un maréchal de France
Est porté le sac sur le dos.’

“‘Out of soldiers are made generals:
And many a marshal of France
Has started with his knapsack on his back.

But as it may be long before this happens, and time is running on, do not be surprised if I withdraw my promise, and my daughter does not wait for you. Adieu!”

This news fell upon poor Nicolas like a thunderbolt, and he remained for some moments almost annihilated. As soon as he recovered himself, he ran to the house of the curé, and related to him all the circumstances of the visit of père Mathieu. The good curé sincerely compassionated him, but what could he do? He ventured, however, to give him some words of consolation; and entreated him not to lose his trust in Providence, but to bear up manfully, and hope the best.

Things were in this state, and Nicolas only waited for the order to march, when one day there entered the village of Bagnolet a handsome carriage with armorial bearings, drawn by four horses, and the postilion and footman in livery. Other equipages followed; and all the coachmen, cracking their whips, drove at full speed down the principal street. Every one was at his door, beholding with wondering eyes this magnificent retinue; but what was their astonishment when they saw the principal carriage stop at the door of Nicolas, and a young and beautiful lady, elegantly attired, descend from it! It was the Duchess of B——, accompanied by several ladies, all of whom likewise alighted, and entered with the Duchess into the house of Nicolas. An hour after,

they came out, and were seen to go to the house of Father Mathieu, and then to Monsieur le curé's; and, finally, all drove off and took the road to Paris.

What was it that had taken place? What was the object of this triple visit? Such was the mystery which each one endeavoured to penetrate; and of the thousand conjectures which were made, it may be said that all had the merit of being equally near, and equally far from, the truth.

The next day, which was Sunday, when the time for the sermon arrived, Monsieur le curé ascended the pulpit; and all eyes were turned towards Nicolas, as the curé said,—“There is a promise of marriage between Nicolas Germain, younger son of Jean Germain, and of Julie Juquet Germain his wife, his father and mother on one side, and Marguerite Mathieu, younger daughter of Jerome Mathieu, and Louise Jobin Mathieu his wife, her father and mother on the other side, all living in the village of Bagnolet,” and the rest, according to the set form. He then preached a sermon on the providence of God, showing that to Him alone belongs the knowledge of the future, and that He never abandons those who put their trust in Him; and he ended by saying that the Duchess of B—— had charged herself with finding a substitute for Nicolas, and providing his dowry and that of Margaret;—making them a present of three thousand francs, with a complete *trousseau*. Moreover, she desired that Nicolas should supply her regularly with fruit and vegetables; she wished to be godmother to the first child which should be born of this union; and the only acknowledgment she asked was, that the young couple should pray for her.

As they came out from church, every one complimented Nicolas and Marguerite, and turned their

back upon the sorcerer, who from this time began to lose favour considerably.

But how was all this done? This is a mystery to the inhabitants of Bagnolet to this day. As we, however, have had the privilege of penetrating it, we propose, good reader, to admit you into our confidence.

A friend of the curé was in the room with him at the time when Nicolas, in despair, had related to him the sorrowful result of his unfortunate adventure. He was so much struck by it, that, on his arrival in Paris, he related the circumstances to the rich and benevolent Duchess of B——, who at once determined to carry into effect the generous plan which we have related.

Fifteen days after this event, the Duchess returned. She assisted herself at the toilet of the bride, was present at the nuptial service in the church with all her suite, and provided, moreover, all the expenses of the repast, and of the ball which followed.

As for the shepherd Césaire, he was soon appreciated at his proper value, and banished to the company of a class of people like himself;—idle vagabonds, and frequenters of the public-house.

THE GUIDE;

AN EPISODE OF THE CIVIL WARS IN SPAIN.



CHAPTER I.

"THE Captain-General! the Captain-General! why does he not come out to us?" These cries were uttered by a crowd of women, tumultuously assembled before the little house where Zumala Carregui lived. "Let him speak to us. We are all devoted to the king, Don Carlos. May God protect him!"

"The General is engaged with a deputy of the Junta," said an officer who came to the door; "he will soon have done, and will then listen to you."

"Now! now! He must hear us instantly!"

"At this moment he is engaged on important business"

"None is more pressing than ours."

"What have you to ask of the General?"

"Vengeance! vengeance!" yelled the women assembled under the windows. "The Negro* yesterday massacred our children—our faithful and valiant sons. Death! death to the Negro!"

"The Captain-General is now planning with the envoy from Madrid the means of securing the vengeance you desire."

* The sobriquet given by the Carlists to the Christinos, one of whose generals was named Negro.

"The blood of our sons is still smoking—you let it cool. It cries for vengeance, and so do we. Vengeance! vengeance!"

"The General will give it you."

"He is very slow about it," cried an aged woman; "he is very slow. Has Zumala sold himself to Christina?"

"Who dares say so?" demanded the officer.

"I, Peppa,—I, the mother of Iago, of Josè, and Gregorias, whom the Christinos murdered yesterday—I, the Mother of Sorrows—I, a loyal Spaniard, thirsting for the blood of the traitors."

"Woman! are you a Christian?" uttered a stern voice. It was that of Zumala Carregui. "Woman! are you a Christian?"

"As much as your honoured mother," replied Peppa.

"And do you thus thirst for blood?"

"Yes; for the Christinos have drunk the blood of my three sons."

"They shall suffer for their cruelties. Return home; you *shall* have vengeance."

"Now!—this instant!" cried the grey-haired mother.

"Yes, yes!—this instant, this instant!" repeated the other women.

"Women, obey! Return to your homes."

"What shall we do there?" asked Peppa. "Our children are no longer there."

"No! their mutilated bodies are hanging upon the trees. Poor fellows! not even to lay them in holy ground!—not even a priest near them in their last moments! Curses! curses upon their murderers!"

"By my sword! I, Zumala Carregui,—I swear to you, women, your valiant sons shall be avenged!"

"Long live Zumala! Death—death to the Negros! May thy mother, thy wife, thy daughter be flayed,

mutilated, tortured before thy very eyes, Sir Generalissimo of the faithful army, if thou deceive us!"

"Who in all Spain has ever known me forfeit my word? who among you can say, 'Zumala has betrayed his oath?'"

"No being under the sun," replied the crowd.

"Well, then, women, return to your homes—I repeat it. The Christinos shall dearly repay the blood they have shed."

"Noble blood, if ever there was any," cried she who called herself the Mother of Sorrows—"the blood of a Castilian and a Navarrese."

"Every faithful Spaniard who dies for Carlos is as noble as thy sons," said the other women to Peppa; "and ours ought to be avenged as well as thine."

"Yes, yes; vengeance for you, vengeance for me, vengeance for all!" cried the aged Peppa, with flashing eyes and dishevelled locks, and raising her hands towards heaven.

At this moment the startling tones of a bell were heard in the village; and at the end of the street, above the heads of the crowd, the canopy of the holy Viaticum was seen approaching; then the women, who the moment before were in a state of frenzy, and crying for vengeance, fell suddenly upon their knees in an attitude of the greatest reverence.

A man was dying, who had, in his better days, been invested with some amount of authority; as secretary to an alcalde, his ambition was gratified for a short time under Joseph Bonaparte: he then had shown a predilection for the ideas of modern philosophers; had used every means in his power to circulate their writings in Spain; and finished by becoming a revolutionist.

He was now about to quit the earth, and wing his flight far beyond the reach of human opinion. It had been but just to forget, around his death-bed, his

political conduct; but to expect reason and justice from the passions is as useless as to wish that the leaves of the trees should not be agitated when the wind blows, or that the waves of the ocean should submerge when the tempest is unloosed.

Thus when the priest, standing near the bed, was about to give the Communion to the dying man, Peppa rose from the floor where she was kneeling, and seizing the arm of the minister of God, cried, "Reverend father, stop; he to whom you are about to administer is not a Carlist."

"He is a Christian," replied the priest. "Kneel, woman, and pray!"

"I will pray for him who is about to die; but let him pray aloud for our children. The prayer of a dying man is powerful with the Lord. Let this Christino—for he is a Christino—pray aloud for the Carlist soldiers."

"May God have mercy upon all!" said the dying man in a feeble voice.

"It is not enough," replied the mother, carried away by her thoughts of vengeance—"it is not enough; he must curse the murderers of our children."

"He will pray for all, and curse none," replied the priest; "and against you, woman, will I pronounce an anathema, if you fall not on your knees, and pray in silence. God is among you; let there be reverence and prayer! Death is at hand; let there be mercy and pardon!"

At these words, pronounced in a tone of authority, Peppa fell upon her knees, and the most profound silence reigned in the room.

The sick man profited by this calm, and, raising from under the clothes his wasted hand, he made a sign that he had something to say.

"In order that I may worthily receive," said the

partisan of Christina, with a faltering voice, "I must humble myself, reverend father, before the Christians who have come to pray for me, at the point of death. It is—it is the recollection of perjury that distresses me: if I had remained true to my first oath—if I had not deserted the cause of my legitimate lord and master—if I had not violated the faith that I had sworn to him, I should die more happy. But you see—all you who are here to see me die—my perjury has helped to bring strangers upon my native land; and when I shall be laid in my grave, their feet will trample upon the land of my birth; which they will water, too, with the blood of her children. I therefore implore all the good Christians whom I see praying for me, to remain faithful to their legitimate sovereign. Yes, to Don Carlos! whom God protect;" murmured the dying man.

"Now may God pardon him!" said Peppa; "he has prayed for our king."

"The first who interrupted the penitent Christino was Ximenes, who was kneeling in a corner of the room. This old soldier of Charles IV. had noticed with sorrow the ungrateful conduct of Ferdinand VII. towards his father, and had followed the dethroned king to Rome. After the death of his royal master, he lived upon the bounty granted by the sovereign Pontiff; but having heard that Don Carlos had been obliged to draw the sword to reconquer his kingdom, he returned with his two sons.

Ximenes was sixty years old. His thick, curly, snow-white hair bore witness to his age; whilst his beard and moustachios remained of the deepest jet, as though to show that this man possessed at once all the experience and wisdom of age, combined with the freshness of youth.

When the dying man had received the last consolations of religion, and when the people who had

accompanied the priest had descended into the street, Peppa approached close to Ximenes, and said, "There is another of them pardoned."

"Woman, you speak as though you were sorry for it."

"Would you have me rejoice?"

"If you thought more of the Gospel, you would remember that there is more joy in heaven over the conversion of one sinner, than for the safety of ninety-nine just persons."

"The Gospel was not made in the time of the Negros."

"Peppa! the reverend father, who ordered you to be silent in the sick man's room, would reprove you if he heard you speak thus."

"Oh, I know that! But you are not a priest; you are an old soldier; you are not afraid to rush into battle and shed blood. You have children, and can conceive the grief of losing them, the pleasure of avenging them, and the joy of seeing blood pay for blood. Ximenes, why have you only got your son Pedro with you? Where is Juan?"

"Juan! I have been seeking him for nearly a week; his captain sent him upon a mission, to convey some despatches; he ought to have been back two days ago."

"And you are not anxious about him!"

"Who said that I was not?"

"Yesterday you were looking at the marriage dances."

"True, we can often look upon pleasure with death in the soul."

"It is not death that fills *my* heart, it is worse: it is the burning thirst of revenge for my three brave boys. A pedlar came this morning to the village and told how those English rascals, whom Christina has brought to defend her cause, continue their

cruelties. This morning three heads were found nailed upon the doors of the church of St. Lorenzo. One of these heads, the man said, was still beautiful; it was that of a young man, fair and with auburn hair like a woman's."

"Peppa!" anxiously inquired Ximenes, "Peppa! do you speak the truth. Did the man say what you now tell me?"

"I swear to you, he said what I repeat to you."

"The head of a young man, fair and with auburn hair."

"Yes."

"Like that of a woman?"

"Yes."

"At St. Lorenzo?"

"Yes, upon the church-door."

"Oh! My Juan was obliged to pass by St. Lorenzo. Oh! my poor boy; who with the heart of a lion was tender and beautiful as a woman. Peppa, if it was his head that the pedlar saw! That head so doted on by his poor mother. Peppa! if it be he! if it be he!"

Repeating these words, Ximenes with one of his powerful hands wiped away the cold sweat that anguish had caused to run down his face; and with the other clutched the handle of his poignard with a force enough to crush it; his eyes flashed like burning coals from under his white hair and thick eyebrows, and between his black moustache, his teeth glistened like those of a lion thirsting for blood.

Peppa had attained her end; she had kindled the flame of revenge in that soul of iron. It was almost with a smile that she contemplated the fury she had excited. Ximenes was held in consideration by Zumala; Ximenes should join himself to the women; Ximenes should cry for vengeance to the Captain-General.

"Come with us," said she, taking the soldier's arm. "Come."

"Where?"

"To the Captain-General."

"He is with the deputies of the Junta."

"He shall break off the conference."

"Why?"

"To listen to us with more attention than he did just now."

"He does not like crowds of women; he does not listen to them."

"He will listen to thee."

"He knows best what to do."

"No, no; he does not; he does not; because his daughters have not been tortured, massacred like my sons,—like thine; he knows not that glorious incentive to war which springs from hearts burning for vengeance! Ximenes, the head of his son has not been nailed to the door of a church!"

"Come on! come on!" cried Ximenes, as, followed by the whole mass of people, he hurried towards the house of the Captain-General.

In wars such as Zumala Carregui carried on; wars of opinion, where the soldiers are not paid, the voice of the camp carries more weight with it than in regular and paid armies. The general of Don Carlos knew this; he, therefore, advanced towards the group, and when he recognised Ximenes, he said to him, "So you think that we ought to descend into the valley and fall upon the Christinos?"

"General, we ought to fall upon the wolves who every night carry off, tear in pieces, mangle, and devour the lambs." Here the voice of Ximenes faltered; for he thought of his dear Juan.

"But only yesterday, Ximenes, you told me that the Christinos were blocked up in the valley, and that it was best to let them die in the midst of

the marshes, in which are generated fever and death!"

"True, General, I said so yesterday; but to-day I think that death too merciful for them. It is not fever, it is not disease, which should avenge our children—it is our hands, our swords!"

"But who will be our guide across this marsh? you know that, to preserve themselves from our fire, the Christinos have surrounded themselves with water: who will lead us to them?"

"I," cried Ximenes; "I will be your guide!"

"Long live Ximenes!" All the women, the villagers, even the little children took up the shout—"Long live Ximenes!"

They were about to march towards death; but it more resembled a festival, so great was the joy, the excitement, and clapping of hands. Peppa in particular seemed intoxicated with delight. She had gained the object of her desire.

With a wave of the hand Zumala stilled the tumult; and when silence was restored, said,

"Night is the time to make war upon the wolves. Let the expedition be deferred until this evening, and you shall fulfil your promise, Ximenes, of being our guide."

"God and the recollection of my sons shall be mine," replied the old soldier.

"And your experience; for I am sure that no one knows this part of the country better than you. Were you not a smuggler before you were a soldier?"

"I followed my father—a happier man than I; for in all his dangers he had his two sons at his side, and I, General, have but one, Pedro, whom you see."

"Where is your boy, whom I took for a girl in disguise before I saw his courage?"

"They have killed him—murdered him ; they have nailed his fair head upon the gate of St. Lorenzo !"

"Ah ! Ximenes, now I can account for your impatience. Be assured I will not delay your vengeance. I will hasten our departure. This evening, then, my brave comrade !"

CHAPTER II.

THE evening came with its refreshing breezes ; and all the plants of the mountains, the olive-trees with their pale-grey leaves, seemed to quiver with delight in the refreshing coolness ;—it was as though the soft breath of a beloved one was lulling them to repose after the heat of the day. In times of peace it would have been a happy moment for the *bolero* ; for the sound of the guitar and the castanets ;—not so now ! Here, indeed, were women ; here were men seated on the grass ; but when they rise it will not be at the call of pleasure ; it will not be to dance on the greensward. It will be at the shout of war ; the cry of vengeance ringing in their ears. Up ! to revenge or death !

The word is given, they have all risen now ; they descend from the heights ; they march noiselessly forward. Zumala has ordered " Silence." Zumala is with them. Woe ! woe to the soldiers of Christina !

The path leading down into the plain was so rugged and narrow that the Carlists were not able to walk two abreast. The shrubs which the smugglers always leave growing in these passes, hid from the sight of the inhabitants of the plain the band which was advancing to wreak their vengeance upon them.

In order to prevent their high-crowned hats, covered with red and yellow ribands, from being seen, the men who followed Ximenes stooped, so that they might not overtop the low and stunted shrubs of the mountain. At a place where two large fragments of rock on the right and left of the path formed a sort of doorway, Peppa had stationed herself with the women of the hamlet; and there, mounted on a large stone, she stretched out her withered arm over every man as he passed, and uttered over each, "May the curse of God rest upon thy head, if thou returnest like a coward; if thou leavest a single Negro alive of those who have killed my sons!"

It was a scene that a great writer would have loved to describe; the bright stars twinkled in the twilight; Peppa's dark robes fluttered in the night breeze; and her white dishevelled locks, waving in the wind, flashed through the darkness; and when she had pronounced these words of vengeance, they were repeated as by an invisible choir; for the other women had remained concealed amidst the junipers and the furze bushes.

There are times when a mysterious work goes on in the bosom of the mountains. The eye of man sees it not—the ear of the shepherd tending his flock hears it not; but suddenly a subterraneous thunder shakes the earth and rends the mountain's side, and a mighty torrent bursts forth, sweeping before it enormous masses of rock, and hurrying on to engulf in its waters the village which smiles so peacefully in the valley below.

Thus the hamlet of San Lorenzo was about to see a torrent of armed men thirsting for slaughter burst upon it. Amongst the inhabitants, who slept unsuspectingly under the shelter of their humble roofs, many were doomed to awake only in eternity; and

from the darkness of their lowly couch pass into the gloom of the grave.

The soldiers of Zumala had arrived at the first house in the village, and so deep a silence had been kept by all, that the Christinos had not the smallest suspicion that death was so near. At last a gun is heard; a cry of alarm resounds through the village; and the chief of the Negros, seeing himself surprised, orders his men to take up a position in the church.

Built upon a rising ground at the extremity of the village, it could be converted into a kind of fortress. Such is the terrible necessity of war! The house of the God of peace to become a slaughter-house—the place of prayer, the battle-field—the place of blessing, a place of death. Alas! alas!

Woe to you, Christinos! shut up within those sacred walls! A second wall—a wall of men—surrounds and hems in the church, and if the walls of stone should split and fall to let you out, the iron circle of Zumala Carregui's soldiers would not open for your deliverance. No; it will become ever firmer and firmer, hemming and pressing you in like a vice, and not one will escape its terrible grasp. Woe! woe to you also, Carlists! for the revenge you desire will cost you dear; from the top of the turret of this church, a hailstorm of bullets—a shower of death—will fall upon your heads. Your oaths have left nothing but despair to those men who have sought refuge there: but even despair deals terrible blows, and often performs prodigies. Carlists, beware!

Zumala, when in front of the church, thought of the horrible carnage about to pollute it, and even he, accustomed as he was to battle, shuddered.

“Where is the Curé?” he demanded.

“Here am I,” replied an aged priest, “here am I, General; I am come to implore you not to carry fire and sword into the house of God.”

"Let those who have sought refuge in it, as in a fortress, come out and deliver up their arms to me."

"Will you protect their lives?"

"Stay! stay, General," cried Ximenes; "do not promise; the assassins of our children will escape."

"Ximenes is right: let those who drew the sword perish by the sword; let our sons be avenged!" Thus cried the women who had followed the soldiers of Zumala.

"Priest of God, you shall parley with them. Enter your church, and preach to those who profane it with their warlike preparations, submission and obedience to our lord and master, Don Carlos."

The Curé advanced towards the door of the church; instead of the usual white flag he carried a crucifix in his hand; the sacred symbol did not preserve him, a ball fired from the belfry entered his skull, and stretched him a corpse a few steps from the very threshold he had so often crossed in peace.

At sight of this, redoubled fury and a fresh thirst of revenge seized the whole Carlist band. "Death! death! punishment, torture, to those who kill priests; to those who have murdered our children!"

These yells, in spite of the firing of guns from each side, must have reached the ears of the Christinos, who were firing through all the openings of the belfry,—openings made for the passage of the holy and peaceful sound of the bells, but now pouring forth death.

Ximenes, who saw the priest fall, had run towards him to help him, and thus, finding himself near the porch, had the courage to look at the oak doors, to see if, notwithstanding the change caused by death, he could recognise the head of Juan, his beloved child. He had sufficient strength of mind to go close up to the three heads which the Christinos had nailed to the door—he leant forward to one of

them, which had still its long and auburn hair; suddenly a piercing cry escaped his manly breast, a cry so loud that it might have been heard by those who fought above him in the belfry.

Can you guess what wrung this cry from him? It was joy; yes, joy; for the auburn locks were not Juan's! With a heavy load removed from his heart, Ximenes returned to Zumala Carregui. If the old soldier's thirst for vengeance had diminished, that of Peppa and her companions had increased to a frightful intensity; for the smoke of battle intoxicates.

The Carlists lost a great number of their men, which increased their rage; but still the walls and the doors of the church resisted their bullets. At last a small field-piece found in the village was brought up, and planted against the door; a few discharges were sufficient to cause the old oak planks to give way; then followed a dreadful struggle. The Christinos, seeing the opening, rushed in force to make a sortie, whilst the Carlists pressed forward with all their might to get into the nave, and there fall upon the Christinos, the sacrilegious murderers of the Curé.

These two mighty waves, more difficult to allay than those of the tempestuous sea, rushed against each other, mingled together, and were quickly covered with blood.

Instead of the holy hymns and canticles of the church, what clamour, what oaths and blasphemies, what cries and groans, resounded through the vaulted roofs of the sacred edifice!

Everybody found there was put to death; all except those who, instead of fighting, had fled into the sanctuary, and embraced the altar. To put themselves out of the reach of vengeance, these had taken all the crosses in the church, the silver ones used on great festivals, and those of wood used in the funeral

processions of the poor, and with these symbols of mercy and pardon, and with the reliquaries of saints and the banners of the different religious societies, had made themselves a sort of fortification.

It was respected, and the flood of vengeance was arrested upon the first step of the altar of our Lady of Mercy. Zumala Carregui had placed himself there, and with his powerful voice had said to Carnage "No further shalt thou come!"

There now only remained in the church dead and wounded, blood and ruin: Fury no longer raised her voice; but in the belfry the Christinos still maintained themselves; to prevent being stormed from below, they had taken away the ladder, and thus, as it were, dug a pit under their place of refuge. If they shouted in triumph because they were out of the reach of their enemies, the Carlists applied the most outrageous epithets to them, comparing them to crows who were afraid of the smell of powder, and who took refuge in the highest towers because they feared for their young ones. Three summonses to surrender had been made to the rebels by Zumala Carregui himself, and three volleys were the only replies to the voice of the Captain-General. Ximenes would not allow his fearless chief to advance alone, and had accompanied him through a storm of bullets. The day began to dawn, the heavens to brighten, and by the first streak of light which began to diffuse itself behind the church, they could see some of the obstinate Christinos running backwards and forwards on the roof. Ximenes was in hopes that he should be able to recognise some of them. But now it was impossible to distinguish any one at that height, in the twilight, and amidst the clouds of smoke which rose above the belfry.

The soldiers of Zumala, furious at being unable to reach the Christinos, who had demolished the ladder,

lit an immense fire under the lofty intrenchments of their enemies. There, huddled together in the narrow stone tower, the rebels must soon have perished from suffocation, for the fire increased every moment; and all that would burn, everything found in the church, the stalls of the chancel, the desks of the singers, the balustrades of the chapels, fed the flames. It required a great amount of dogged courage to resist this torture of flame and smoke; the besieged in the belfry held out for a long time, and before a voice was raised to beg for quarter, many a corpse had fallen, blackened and half-burnt, from the tower, together with the rafters, the planks, and the bells themselves. At last, amidst the crackling of the flames, cries were heard; they were those of ten men whom the smoke had not yet stifled, but who could hold out no longer, and who had resolved to surrender.

"Will you spare our lives?" demanded the partisans of Christina.

"Did you spare our brothers, the heroic soldiers of Charles IV., who fell into your hands?"

"Did you spare our children?" cried the women.

"Do with us what you please, but in God's name let us come down."

"How dare you speak of God, you who murder his priests?"

"Let us come down! let us come down!"

"We warn you, if you come down, it is to die."

"Any death will be sweet compared to the torments we suffer here."

"Ah! since they suffer so much up there," cried Peppa, who, with her companions, had been the most active in feeding the flames, "since they suffer so much, let them remain there; it is only a foretaste of that punishment which awaits them."

This fearful dialogue would have been prolonged,

had not the royalist chief ordered several ladders to be brought, which were speedily joined together, and placed where the former ladder had been destroyed. The men who descended were horrible to behold: their burnt clothes, their hands and features blackened with blood and smoke, and the slowness with which they stepped upon each round of the ladder, added still more to this dreadful scene.

And what a fate awaited them when they reached the floor of the church! Ximenes, impatient at this delay seized the arm of the first, and said, as he dragged him roughly to the ground, "Come, be quick!"

"Oh, father! my feet are burned," said the rebel.

"Father!" repeated Ximenes; "who art thou that callest me father?"

"Juan—your son Juan."

"Thou liest! I have no son amongst the traitors."

"Look at me, father."

The young rebel, to let himself be recognised, wiped off with his sleeve, and his burnt hands, the smoke and ashes which concealed his features and auburn hair.

Ximenes, having looked at him, uttered a loud cry. He then quitted the foot of the ladder, and leaving to others the care of making the rebels come down more quickly, followed him who called himself his son, and who walked with great difficulty, so dreadfully were his feet burnt. When he rejoined him, he took him again by the arm, and said to him,—

"Thou canst not be Juan!"

"Would I were not!"

"Thou canst never have turned traitor; thou hast never deserted the cause of thy old father; the cause which all those thou lovest would lay down their lives for!"

“ Oh, that all that I love had loved the cause of Don Carlos ! ”

“ If thou art my son Juan, as thou sayest, speak ! whom knowest thou in our family that is not for the legitimate sovereign ? ”

“ In our family, I know, all are for Don Carlos ; but, father, ” —

“ Go on. ”

“ Angela Lopez — ”

“ Well ! ”

“ Is for Christina. ”

“ And it was she who made thee desert thy colours. ”

“ Yes ; her hand was the price. ”

“ May her hand, then, burn eternally. ”

“ Father, father ! do not curse her ! ”

“ No ; I will not curse her only, I will curse you both. ”

By this time all the men who were in the belfry had descended the ladder, and Peppa and her companions crowded eagerly round them, demanding that they should be tortured that instant in the church which they had profaned, and also in presence of the body of the Curé who had fallen a victim to their fury. Ximenes, hearing their savage cries, turned and concealed with his body the rebel who had called him father. Then seeing that from threats they were proceeding to execute their vengeance, that swords and daggers were pointed against the breasts of the Christinos, he endeavoured to push the young man towards the sanctuary, where those were praying under the safeguard of the altar who had not joined in the fight. But he resisted, saying, “ Father, I cannot go there. ”

“ Unhappy boy ! Those who are at the altar will escape the slaughter. I am forcing thee towards thine own safety. ”

“ I will go where honour leads me. I am the companion of the men they are going to kill ; I will not desert them ! ”

“ Why didst thou desert the cause of our lord and master, Don Carlos ? ”

“ I have told you, father. But this moment is a solemn one : it will be cowardice to desert those who are about to die.”

“ Now, now I know thee : thou art Juan ! thou art my son ! ”

“ And you have cursed me ! ”

“ May God pour out his mercy upon the man who feels what honour is ! ”

“ Father ; one more prayer : withdraw thy curse from Angela.”

“ No ; she is the cause of thy crime, of thy death ; never will I pardon her ! ”

“ Father ! father ! by the blood of the Saviour, by the tears of his holy Mother, I implore you pardon her ; pardon her ! ”

“ Never ! never ! ”

Thus supplicating, Juan embraced his father's knees. But, seeing the inflexible determination of the old man, he rose and walked towards his comrades, whom they had just made kneel down. Ximenes stood motionless, and—shall I say it ?—one drop of joy had fallen amidst the horrible torture of his heart,—it was to see Juan, the son whom he so dearly loved, conduct himself so nobly. But to escape seeing the massacre, the old soldier had covered his face with his hands. Peppa saw him, and approaching him, said, “ Thou art playing the woman, Ximenes ; thou art growing cool in the cause ; thou canst not look upon the blood of the traitors.”

“ Go ! ” cried the father of Juan ; and with his powerful arm roughly repulsed the woman maddened by the desire of revenging her sons.

A fearful scene was on the point of being enacted. Peppa and the rest of the women had made themselves acquainted with the details of the cruelties exercised by the Christinos upon their children ; and they swore to repay torment by torment, cruelty by cruelty. They were resolved to copy all faithfully.

Everything was in readiness for the fearful reprisals, — sharpened knives, heated irons, burning coals. Suddenly, Zumala Carregui appeared, and put a stop to this feast of the Furies.

“ You are Christians, Spanish women ! ” cried he, in a voice of thunder. “ You are Christians ! You call these men sacrilegious and profane, who have fought in this holy place. You are right ; for the house of the God of peace should not be defiled with blood. But what preparations are these ? Your sons, I know, have been cruelly massacred. I have promised, and do so still, that justice shall be done to each ; but I forbid you to turn executioners. The first among you who dares lift her hand against one of these men shall be punished with instant death. Women, make place for my soldiers ; it is their duty to watch over the rebels.”

The words of Zumala reached Ximenes, who was fixed to the spot like a marble statue. Oh, how his paternal heart blessed him ! Those words had turned aside the dagger from the fair breast of his son ; they might perhaps save his life, for Zumala Carregui only made bloody reprisals when no other way was open to him. The true soldier cannot endure executions in cold blood ; he requires the delirious excitement of the battle before he can shed the blood of his fellow-man.

Reader, you may have at some time witnessed the most violent tempest suddenly give place to the profoundest calm. An unseen power has arrested its violence, as if it were the voice of an angel. So was

it when the royalist chief had spoken. As the waves of the sea rolled back at the command of Moses, so the tumultuous assemblage retired, and made a path for the Captain-General; and all the Christinos were instantly marched off between two files of soldiers, and confined in the cellars of a deserted convent.

In Spain (as the reader may be aware), when a man is condemned to death, religion takes him under her care, and the brotherhood who have the charge of his burial, pray with the Christian about to suffer. Sometimes the relations and friends are permitted to visit him, to encourage and exhort him whose earthly career is drawing to a close, and embrace him who is standing on the brink of eternity.

To accustom him to look upon death, a coffin is placed in the chamber, which serves him as a place of rest; and if he is cold in his prison bed, the pall with the red cross is his covering.

Ximenes came to visit his son in the Chapel of the Dead. When he entered, Juan was not alone; a young man was with him, who wore the brown habit of a monk of St. Benedict. At the sound of the footsteps of the soldier of Don Carlos, the monk covered his head with the hood, and yielded up his place near the condemned Christino. There was a deep and solemn silence. Juan feared to begin the conversation; it was his father who said to him,

“Juan, I am happy that thy mother is dead.”

“And I also; for I have just prayed to her, as to an angel.”

“What hast thou prayed for?”

“That God would give me strength to die as a soldier.”

“As a soldier! and whose?”

“Father, I prayed that I might die as a brave man.”

"I never thought till now that a son of Ximenes would have need to make such a prayer."

"What man is strong without God's help?" said the monk.

"You say right, father," replied Ximenes; "but I am sure that if my son had remained faithful to the good cause, he would have had less need to pray for a brave man's death."

"God alone knows which is the good and holy cause."

"The good and holy cause!—I know which it is. The good cause is fidelity to an oath; the bad, perjury. Behold my feet red with gore; they are so because, to come here, I was forced to wade through the blood shed yesterday. And if the children of noble Spain had followed the footsteps of their fathers, this blood would not have been spilled, and my son would not be here; and a woman whom I——"

"Stop, my father! You are in the Chapel of the Dead. Curse no one here."

"From my very soul, I say to thee, Juan, there is no Chapel of the Dead, no sanctuary, where I will not curse her! Ah, Juan!—my beloved Juan! thou wert so pure; now how vile—how dishonoured!"

"It is false, old man!" exclaimed the monk.

"Who speaks thus to me?"

"I——"

"The lie thou hast given me shall be thy last word."

"So be it! Strike!—kill me! It will be kind; I shall then die with him."

"Who art thou?"

"My wife!" cried Juan; at the same instant rushing between his father, who had drawn his dagger, and Angela Lopez, who had thrown off her disguise; "my wife, who is come as an angel to show me the way to heaven."

"Say, rather, as a fiend to drag thee down with her to the bottomless pit."

"Señor Ximenes, I am young, and age has silvered your locks. Pardon my hasty words; but you told your son, my husband Juan, that he was vile and dishonoured. I could not restrain my feelings. It is my love for him that made me forget the respect due to you—to you, an old man, whose son must soon suffer."

"If he dies, who will have drawn down upon him such a fate?"

"If he dies—speak, Ximenes—who was the guide to his murderers?"

"Angela, speak not thus to my father."

"Bless thee, Juan! thou hast compassion upon me."

These words, "Who was the guide to his murderers?" had pierced the heart of the old soldier; he could have supported everything but this thought, that it was he that had acted as the guide. When the words had passed the lips of Angela Lopez, he had hid his face in his hands, and bitter tears streamed from his eyes.

The priest whose duty it was to administer consolation to the dying, entered the chapel, and the prayers for the dying began. It was now seven o'clock; at nine the execution was to take place.

Juan addressed his father—"Will you leave me?"

"No; I will wait till the end."

"And at the last moment you will bless us?"

"Yes; I will bless thee—thee, my son!"

"And her, to whom I have plighted my faith before God and before a priest?"

Ximenes was silent; then, after a great inward struggle, he stretched out his hands, and blessed her.

The prayers ceased—the roll of the drums announced that the moment of execution had arrived.

On leaving the court of the prison, Juan, who held in his hand a cigarette, as though he had many leisure hours to pass away, looked about him to see where he could obtain a light. The Captain-General, who was present to prevent the horrible cruelties which he feared might be exercised upon the prisoners, and had remarked what he had required, handed to the condemned man the cigar which he himself was smoking. The son of Ximenes made use of it, and returned it to the Carlist chief, at the same time respectfully saluting him.

The General followed him with one of those deep, sorrowful, and penetrating glances which he alone could give, accompanying it with these words: "So brave a young man should have died only at my side, and under our banners."

"Such words," said an officer near the General—"such words, from the lips of Zumala Carregui, are the most glorious funeral oration."

"True!" added an old man.

At that moment a report of musketry was heard, then a sound of one falling to the ground. It was Ximenes. Since then Ximenes has fought in every battle, but has not found what he sought—Death!

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